

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

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THE SHIFT TO TENTMAKING MISSIONS STRATEGY

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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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## ABSTRACT

### THE SHIFT TO TENTMAKING IN MISSIONS STRATEGY

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The purpose of this paper is to discuss the important place that tentmaking holds or should hold in missions strategy. It is the belief of the author (supported by almost 20 years of ministry experience overseas) that visas and money are often barriers to ministry effectiveness. This paper would like to provide a solution (i.e. tentmaking) to these common tensions that most missionaries encounter. The value of the topic is very personal to the author's ministry: first because I am currently serving on the mission field (needing a visa and money), and second because of the potential tentmaking holds for engaging the local community on a deeper level through the "how to" techniques this paper provides. Missionaries everywhere can and will benefit, just as I have from the practical findings and instructions that have come to light from this project. Specifically they will discover that tentmaking is a biblical missions methodology that not only acts as a financial supplement but also provides access to the necessary visas and legitimizes the missionary's presence in the eyes of the local authorities. The research for this paper will be approached from a biblical or theological direction. The history of tentmaking will be explored and the modern day examples will be examined. Interviews with tentmaking missionaries will be conducted and personal illustrations will be given. The various aspects of tentmaking will be discussed, such as legal issues, the ideal types of businesses, and the necessary teamwork.

## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iv
INTRODUCTON.....	1
Chapter 1 Proposing the tent making strategy .....	3
The Statement of the Problem.....	3
The Statement of Limitations.....	6
The Theoretical Basis for the Project.....	6
The Statement of Methodology .....	8
The Review of Literature .....	13
Tentmaking.....	13
Money .....	21
Ethics.....	22
Partnerships .....	22
Bible Verses Review (Using the New Living Translation) .....	24
CHAPTER 2 PAUL - THE TENTMAKER .....	30
CHAPTER 3 PRINCIPLES OF THE TENT MAKING BUSINESS .....	48
Money .....	48
Ethics.....	57
Morality.....	63
CHAPTER 4 PARTNERSHIPS IN THE TENT-MAKING BUSINESS .....	66
Leadership.....	66
Partnerships.....	69
Teamwork .....	76

CHAPTER 5 PRACTICAL PARTS OF THE TENT MAKING BUSINESS .....	90
CONCLUSION .....	106
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	108
APPENDIX A TENT MAKER’S QUESTIONNAIRE .....	117
VITA.....	122

## INTRODUCTON

For the past twenty years, my family and I have been serving as missionaries in Asia. In 1992, we arrived in Singapore and lived there for almost ten years. In 2003, we moved to China and have been living here for almost ten years. Our income is not based on a fixed salary. Churches have promised to pray for us and support us financially to live and serve here in Asia. Back in 1991, it took us eighteen months, traveling from church to church, to gather enough support and raise sufficient funds to live overseas. We visited over one hundred and fifty churches and ninety of those began supporting our family. Over the years, we have lost some support and gained some support but God has always provided and has been so good to our family.

However, the past nine years has caused us to rethink parts of our missions strategy. First, we are seeing that it is taking much longer for new missionaries to raise enough support to live in a foreign country. A young family would like to come to China and work with us. They are in their third year of trying to raise support for a short-term stay and then they plan to return to the States after two years to raise the rest of their support for long term. We can blame it on the economy, personalities, networking, or churches changing their meeting times. We think it is taking too long for new missionaries to raise support to get to their perspective countries.

Second, it has been a struggle to find a way to obtain a visa to live in a country that does not welcome missionaries. Singapore welcomed missionaries but China does not. The first four years we lived here in China we were in a language school and obtained a student visa. For the past five years, we have had to be more creative. We started a consulting business, which

provided us a visa for three years, but it was not profitable financially and looked suspicious in the eyes of the government. Two years ago we started another business that is now, very successful and profitable. Not only is it providing us a visa, but we are also able to provide visas and salaries for five more missionaries who work with our company. We have also employed a Chinese staff and have become a legitimate part of our community.

We believe God has allowed us to work with this biblical strategy to help new missionaries overcome some of the obstacles such as time, money, and access into countries that are otherwise restricted.



## CHAPTER 1

### PROPOSING THE TENTMAKING STRATEGY

#### The Statement of the Problem

How can new missionaries get to their respective countries in less time? How can prospective missionaries who desire to take the gospel to the regions beyond, but have limited connections and no fund raising networks, find enough financial support to go and live overseas? How can missionaries get into countries that do not welcome religious workers? How can new missionaries integrate into the community in a natural way? How can missionaries give themselves the best opportunity to enjoy the most effective ministries possible?

A tentmaking missions strategy is the answer to all of these important questions. Tentmaking missions is biblical and a closer look reveals that it was a major part of Paul's missions strategy. A strict definition of tentmaking may exclude some of the strategic methods God is using in certain parts of the world. Tentmaking missionaries come in several variations. Because it takes all kinds of ministries to reach this world for Christ, it seems that God has given much freedom in style, method, and combination, which is the beauty of tentmaking. However, it would be best to use Paul's tentmaking strategy as the example and stay as close to that example as possible.

One writer defines the term "tentmaker" as missions-committed Christians who support themselves abroad, and make Jesus Christ known on the job and in their free time. They are in full-time ministry even when they have full-time jobs, because they integrate work and witness. They follow Paul's model of tentmaking, and for the same reasons.<sup>1</sup> Another writer defines a

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth E. Siemens, "The Vital Role of Tentmaking in Paul's Mission Strategy,"

tentmaking missionary as one who has a calling for full-time missionary service but is unable to enter the country of choice because of restrictions and has to modify their mode of service.<sup>2</sup>

Tentmakers are dedicated, spiritually mature Christian men and women who view work in light of the Great Commission and as an opportunity to serve the Kingdom of God.<sup>3</sup>

Tentmakers can be placed in three categories: job makers, job takers, and job fakers.<sup>4</sup> Some set up businesses, some are employed by others, and some pretend to work but in fact are covertly working as missionaries, doing something other than what is shown on their entry visa.<sup>5</sup> Our first consulting business could probably be labeled as a job faker. We went there as evangelists, church planters, and bible teachers, but never considered becoming a businessperson. We had no passion for running a business, or at least that particular business. Some say the tentmaker will always be a job faker. Even if that is true, we hope this paper will help the job faker become more legitimate and effective in their total ministry.

The business we have now puts us in the category of being a job maker. We have established a company that has become a legitimate business that generates income, serves a

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International Journal of Frontier Missions, Vol. 14:3, (July–September, 1997) 121, (accessed July 15, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Lai, “Tentmaking: Business as Missions,” (Colorado Springs: Authentic Publishing, 2005), 13. 2005, <http://books.google.com/books?id=aShafrwuiI8C>, (accessed November 27, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Worldwide Tentmakers, “What Is a Tentmaker?,” Worldwide Tentmakers | Promoting, Preparing and Placing Witnesses, 2010, <http://www.worldwidetentmakers.com/education/what-is-a-tentmaker>. (accessed November 27, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Patrick Lai, “Tentmaking: business as missions,” 13.

<sup>5</sup> Derek Christensen, “Tentmaking In Today’s Mission Environment” Connections, (April, 2006): 2, <http://www.weaconnections.com>, (accessed August 1, 2011).

need in the community, gives our family and other foreigners a job, and has created jobs for the locals as well. This paper is written to the job maker first, and then to the job taker. It is written to believers, with an entrepreneurial spirit, who are willing to be creative and use their skills and resources to establish a legitimate business, and subsequently help bring over the new missionaries who will become job takers.

The tentmaking missionary is different from the Christian businessperson, sent overseas by a business, in several ways. The tentmaking missionary is formally sent out by his church and is under their authority. The tentmaking missionary has had some formal Bible training. Paul is the example and was well prepared for teaching God's Word. He knew the scriptures better than most young men.<sup>6</sup> After starting the business, the tentmaking missionary should eventually have more control of his or her time and schedule, which is an advantage that the Christian businessperson, sent by their company, may not have.

In this paper, a missionary is defined as one who is officially sent out of a church, as a representative or extension of their church, to take the message of the gospel to other people and groups around the world. The missionary has a part in starting new churches, strengthening existing churches, or training church leaders. We assume the earthly ministry of the missionary results in new churches started, believers being added to the church, and new leaders being raised and trained.

The missionary's priorities need to be established. The church is God's chosen vehicle to reach the world with the gospel. Jesus started His church during His ministry with His disciples and others, as the members. He trained them to lead when He left. Before He ascended into

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<sup>6</sup> Siemens, "The Vital Role of Tentmaking in Paul's Mission Strategy," 127.

heaven, He gave the church the Great Commission, which is to go and tell the whole world about the good news of Jesus Christ, baptize His followers, teach them His Word and gather to worship Him. Every new fellowship or assembly of believers has this commission to send out the gospel and do the same. The church is the result of the missionary's labor. It is the lighthouse that will be standing long after the missionary is gone.

### The Statement of Limitations

This project is an attempt to help the missionary get into countries that do not welcome the gospel, get them there quicker and help them stay there longer. We will not get into the detailed spiritual aspects of the missionary's daily life. While this paper will help position the missionary to be most effective in ministry, our focus will not be on cross-cultural evangelism. This project would never try to qualify who God is going to use in greater ways. We are not implying that missionaries who are not involved in tentmaking or business people sent overseas by their businesses are inferior to the tentmaking missionary. Tentmaking is not for every missionary and it does not have to be applied in every country. While we will talk in ideals and specific terms, there are certainly many variations to the tentmaking missions strategy. My hope is that this paper will persuade many who have never considered tentmaking missions to discover the many advantages and see how Paul used this strategy.

### The Theoretical Basis for the Project

Jesus is our greatest example of a missionary. He left heaven for thirty-three years to give Himself to the world. Jesus did not make tents, but He was a carpenter. At twelve years old,

Jesus, the Son of God, said He was working His Father's business (Lk 2:49 NLT).<sup>7</sup> He was His Father's businessperson.

When Paul met Jesus, his life was changed and when he was ready, his church sent him out as a missionary. Paul invented the tentmaking missions strategy. Acts 18:3 says that Paul made tents. Paul became his heavenly Father's businessperson. This project will gather from the New Testament the reasons why Paul made tents and how his tentmaking missions strategy benefited his ministry.

This project is intended to influence other missionaries to consider including a tentmaking missions strategy as a valuable ministry tool. This valuable missions strategy tool is able to position the missionary to be most effective in ministry. With the right tool, a person can do almost anything and believers would do well to follow the methods found in God's Word.

The first benefit Paul's tentmaking strategy enjoyed was integrity and credibility. No one could claim that Paul was taking advantage of the new believers by asking them to give support to his ministry. He was free to follow God's lead in his life and free from any real accusations. Paul could never be accused of being an obstacle to the gospel.

Another benefit Paul enjoyed was the way tentmaking allowed him to identify with the people he wanted to reach. Paul knew exactly what they were going through. Paul was often hungry and tired. He knew what it was like to live a wealthy life style and a poor life style.

Paul's tentmaking strategy allowed him to model a lifestyle of evangelism as he worked hard. He labored with his hands and worked hard as if God was his boss. Paul taught that men should provide for their families. He warned against laziness, free loaders, and thieves, and

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<sup>7</sup> New Living Translation, Version of the Bible is used throughout this project.

wanted to teach new believers to be generous givers.

This tentmaking strategy enabled Paul to start churches that could support themselves without foreign funds, lead themselves without foreign leadership, and reproduce themselves. The churches that Paul helped start reproduced quickly. Paul ministered in the city and from there, the gospel spread to other cities and to the countryside.

This project will also look at what the Bible has to say about money, both of the dangers and blessings that are involved. Paul's underlying benefit from his tentmaking job was the income that came from his hard work. This money was the tool that was necessary to fund his travels and support his team in order to carry out the mission.

### The Statement of Methodology

This project will target a specific audience. It is written first, to the veteran missionary, then to the potential missionary. We hope this project will also influence sending and supporting churches and pastors, the entrepreneur, and the businessperson who could fund and operate a business venture overseas. Our hope is that it will help the businessperson become a better missionary and a missionary become a better businessperson. It is written to the job maker, the job taker, and to the job faker.

The design of this paper will begin by making the reader aware of a biblical methodology that is not being taken advantage of, but one that offers fresh encouragement for those desiring to take the gospel around the world. It should be known that the tentmaking missions strategy has many advantages and takes some of the excuses, which usually involves money, away from those who desire to go into all the world with the gospel. While it is not just about money and

visas, the tentmaking missions strategy can help missionaries overcome financial concerns and open up doors to countries closed to the gospel. It also has the potential to position the missionary to be most effective in ministry by putting them in close contact with the people they want to reach.

This project will explore the mission's strategy that Paul used from a biblical perspective. We will follow Paul's life and example. This project will stay within the biblical boundaries but will also use all the freedom God allows within this boundary. We will explore the variations of tentmakers and some of the options available.

This project will show the need for preparation. Paul was well prepared for teaching God's Word. He had formal Bible training before he was sent out as a missionary. Then he was officially sent out of his church. While every member in the church at Antioch was to lead people to Christ, they officially only sent out certain ones to other parts of the world for the specific task of sharing the gospel, training leaders, and planting churches. It is assumed that the church at Antioch not only sent them out with their prayers but also sent them out with financial support or a gift of some kind. Paul must have considered and prepared for the necessary costs that would be incurred. Because there was no network of churches to fully support Paul's ministry, he had to either rely on love offerings from churches or people and his tentmaking business.

This project hopes to encourage and build up the potential tentmaking missionary in their life of faith and walk the potential missionary through each step. It is not easy to live overseas in a foreign country, but it is much more comforting when someone is there to advise and instruct. Paul faced hard times but was very persistent. Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying that,

potentially, a great work could be done in Ephesus. He also mentioned that he was up against much opposition, but the opposition did not stop Paul from the opportunity.

Often, the lack of money or lack of faith in God's provisions prevents believers from pursuing the goal God has placed in their hearts. All believers must display faith in God to please Him, but not all that is done in God's name is going to be blessed by God. Admittedly, there is often a fine line between faith and foolishness. This paper is not encouraging foolishness and unnecessary risks but advises caution. Faith must include prayer, patience and planning. "Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see" (Heb 11:1). The only way to please God is by faith, but it is not just mental conviction. Biblical faith must also act. By faith Abel "offered" a sacrifice, Noah "prepared" an ark, and Abraham "obeyed" the Lord. Faith, apart from obedience, is dead (Jas 2:26).<sup>8</sup>

There are things that only God can do, but God has given believers a work to do that must precede His blessings. The ground must be plowed to have a harvest. God does not carve a statue from the marble He made. He does not saw trees into lumber for houses or turn grapes into jelly. It takes hard work.<sup>9</sup> The missionary who expresses this kind of faith in God, uses his brain, and takes action is going to be taken care of and blessed by God. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need (Mt 6:33).

This project will focus on the money aspect of tentmaking. Money is a big part of life and a

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<sup>8</sup> Wayne Jackson, "Hebrews 11 – What Is Faith?" Christian Courier, <http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/501-hebrews-11-what-is-faith>, (accessed August 30,2011).

<sup>9</sup> S. Truett Cathy, "Wealth: Is It Worth It?" (Decatur, Georgia: Looking Glass Books Pub, 2011), 68.



big part of world missions. The tentmaker must take special care to view the business as a part of the whole strategy and not just extra income. Money is certainly not evil and is a necessary part of life. This project has the potential to dispel the notion that missionaries or any ministers of the gospel should be poor. It is biblical to plan for the future and a tentmaking ministry could provide the funds necessary for future ministries as well as for old age.

This project will include the cost of starting a business. Because missions require travel, food, shelter, clothing, supplies, health, education, communication, and a host of other things, it requires money to take the gospel around the world. It is biblical for a church to take extra special care of their minister financially. Nevertheless, in Paul's case, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, it was his God-given skill at tentmaking that helped provide the necessary income for him to carry out his mission.

This project will include a warning about wealth without implying that money is evil. For a long time the Christian community has seemingly discouraged pastors and missionaries from earning extra income. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul gives a warning to all believers. Tentmaking missionaries may have to handle an increase in wealth. Wealth can often lead to a love of money, greed and pride. Anyone can fall into temptation, and for some it could lead to ruin and destruction. Paul did not want to become a castaway so the Bible says he had to beat his body into subjection (1 Cor 9:27).

This project will offer ideal situations to help potential tentmakers make the best decisions. First, an ideal situation would be for the missionary to have enough support, from his home church and/or other churches, to sustain his family during his first four years in language school and, if possible, the next two years while the business is being started.

Second, this project recommends that the potential tentmaker enter the country first as a language student. Most countries will easily grant a visa to those desiring to study their language. The host country will assume the foreign student wants to learn the language for economic and business reasons. Missionaries will elevate their ministries by learning the language of the people they want to reach. This is a great time to learn about the business culture of the particular country, look for business opportunities, and build relationships.

This project will cover the ethical issues that missionaries will face. There will be decisions to make in gray areas for the missionary that may challenge his or her biblical values. This has to be dealt with if things are going to go forward. This project will also cover some of the legal aspects of registering the business as a local company, joint venture or an international company.

This project suggests that the tentmaker must spend time praying for God to lead the right local partner into their life. A local partner is crucial. The company will run much smoother with the right partnership. Tentmaking missionaries should not try to run a company alone in a foreign land. There will be government issues that only a local person can deal with. The partnership does not mean the tentmaker stakes his or her whole life and reputation on their partner. It does mean that the tentmaking missionary must know how to work well with others. Building a team and working with others was part of Paul's success and example.

This project will cover the aspect of working as a team. Building a great team is necessary to lighten everyone's load, efficiently use time, encourage one another, and build a successful business. Paul had a great team as a part of his mission's strategy.

This project recommends starting a business that offers a service rather than starting a business that offers products. Products probably have more potential for wealth but selling a

product is much more complex. Regardless of the type of business pursued, the missionary should expect to be planning and preparing a year or more in advance of the opening day.

This project will include several examples of tentmaking missionaries throughout the years and some modern day examples of tentmaking missionaries. Several missionaries participated in this project and answered questions that should be helpful for potential tentmaking missionaries.

### The Review of Literature

#### Tentmaking

*Paul Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, F. F. Bruce.

Bruce includes Paul's historical background to help the reader fully understand who he was, what he did and why he lived the life he chose to live. Bruce gives a complete picture of Paul that covers his whole life, as well as the culture and geography of the day. There are some areas of Paul's life that are unknown, particularly his early life, but Bruce puts together a clear picture of Paul from the information that is known.

*Analytical Bible Expositor*, Vol. 11, John G. Butler.

*The Analytical Bible Expositor* by John G. Butler is a chapter-by-chapter commentary of the Bible. Each chapter is organized in an analytical, alliterated and outlined style. His exposition of scripture includes practical application. He also offers some historical background on the Bible characters.

1 Corinthians – Coffman Commentary of the New Testament, James B. Coffman.

The James Burton Coffman Commentaries on the Bible were written by Dr. Coffman over a period of twenty-eight years and are in use by Christians throughout the nation and around the

world. His commentaries of the Bible offer great insight for Bible students studying passages in the New Testament.

*Becoming A Contagious Christian*, Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg.

Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg present evangelism as something that should come naturally for every believer. It does not have to be intimidating or frustrating. Every believer needs to be encouraged and informed. Believers just need encouragement and direction. The principles in this book helped the author's home church become very effective in their outreach to the unchurched. This is a personal approach to relational evangelism. The reader will discover how to develop into a contagious Christian. The reader will learn how to build spiritually strategic relationships.

Worldwide Tentmakers "What Is a Tentmaker?"

Worldwide Tentmakers believe tentmaking provided a greater opportunity for Paul than he would have had if he was seen simply as a missionary or pastor. Therefore, his trade in Corinth was a tool that provided greater opportunity to share the saving grace of Jesus Christ both during the week and on the Sabbath in the synagogue. Today, tentmaking has taken on a much broader definition than the simple skill of making tents. Therefore, work is a vital aspect of Christian witness because it provides substantial means of developing relationships, credibility and contexts for ministry.

*Purpose-Driven Life*, Rick Warren.

This popular book states in chapter four that believers were shaped to serve God. In other words, God placed every person on this earth to make a difference by serving God and others in their own ways. People were not placed on earth just to breathe, eat, take up space and

have fun. God fashioned each person to make a unique contribution with his or her life. Warren uses the acrostic SHAPE to help people discover their unique shape for ministry. “S” stands for Spiritual gifts. “H” stands for Heart. “A” stands for Ability. “P” stands for Personality. “E” stands for Experience.

*We Need More Aquilas and Priscillas*, John Sundberg.

Sundberg points out that Paul did not do ministry alone. He had many helpers and partners in the work of the Gospel. Aquila and Priscilla were two of those helpers whom Paul leaned on heavily. He probably even worked for them for a couple years as an employee or subcontractor. Aquila and Priscilla, tentmakers (or leatherworkers), small business owners and residents of Rome, also had business locations in Ephesus and Corinth, which is where they met Paul and joined forces with him. They did not give up their business or their trade when they started following Jesus Christ, which he says is God’s design for the majority of his people. They also apparently knew the Bible and taught Apollos. Aquila and Priscilla took Paul aside and filled in some essential gaps in his knowledge of Christianity. Paul describes them as his fellow workers in Christ, gives them credit for risking their lives for his sake, and then greets the church that was meeting in their house.

*The Five Lessons A Millionaire Taught Me About Life And Wealth*, Richard Evans

The author would like readers to learn the lessons he learned from a millionaire he met when he was a teenager. This man taught the author how to manage a small amount of money, with a goal of being financially independent. The author is very ethical in his advice. He is concerned that people accumulate wealth responsibly. He desires that those who learn the lessons of accumulating wealth use this knowledge to improve themselves and help others. A person does

not have to be highly intelligent or inherit money to become wealthy. The author gives five principles to accumulate wealth and to use that wealth ethically.

MacArthur Commentaries, 1 Corinthians, John MacArthur

John MacArthur is conservative and careful in his interpretation of scripture. This volume on 1st Corinthians handles Paul's letter to the Corinthians in a delicate way. He approaches the theological questions presented by Paul, interpreting them within a Dispensational framework. He denies the possibility of modern uses of the spiritual gifts while affirming those gifts given to all Christians. This commentary is a good resource for any teacher or lay- person interested in 1 Corinthians.

“Bi-vocational – or – go on staff at a large church: Suddenly bi-vocational ministry doesn't look so bad?” David Fitch.

David Fitch's article is asking new pastors to go out and get jobs, and then spend several years in them so they get good at them. This is so the new pastors may become flexible and capable of earning a meaningful income sufficient to support at least half of their salary. Considering the following options, this idea does not look so bad. The other option presented by Fitch for new seminary graduates still in their 20s, is to get out of seminary, get a first job on the staff of an established large church, be a youth pastor, worship leader etc., earn poor wages, be worked to death, never see their family or friends, and work their way up to the senior pastor job in ten years, or by the time they are 35. One seminary reports over 90% of their graduates are not in the ministry after 5 years. A view of the truly amazing missionlife we can be a part of as pastors-leaders in missional communities?

*Preaching freedom to the Corinthians*, Lincoln Galloway.

The author's thesis says that Paul's primary goal in his ministry was to attain the freedom to serve God. He wanted to be free in his time and in his finances. Paul had the right to ask the churches he started to support his ministry but did not want to appear suspect in his motives for starting the church. He wanted to be free from accusations and free from having to work for anyone. He started his own business. This gave him freedom in his time and his finances.

*What It Takes to Live and Work Abroad*, Celeste Heiter.

This author encourages people to follow their dreams to move abroad, but first they must take a good, long look at themselves to see if they have what it takes to live and work abroad. Making the decision to relocate to a foreign country is huge, and having the "right stuff" is important. Lots of people dream of doing it, but a significant percentage of them get where they're going and fail in the first month or two because they didn't realize their own shortcomings and were not aware of the kinds of obstacles and pitfalls that awaited them. The process undoubtedly requires an enormous amount of time, energy, effort and money; not to mention the fact that the adventure comes with no guarantee. Culture, language and climate may present unforeseen difficulties for a foreigner in the course of everyday life. It is crucial to take a thorough personal.

*Acts 9 – Was Paul from a Wealthy Family?*, Martin Hengel.

Martin Hengel thought that Paul's education could be a hint about his social status. If he came to Jerusalem at a young age, then he was likely from a "well-to-do" family, since they could afford to send a son to study in Jerusalem. Therefore, Paul's family may have had some wealth. It is possible that his family was well-connected among the aristocracy in Jerusalem, permitting them to obtain the services of Gamaliel as a teacher for the young Paul. Perhaps he

was on the fast-track to leadership in the Sanhedrin, which would be an explanation to why he had access to the High Priest when he wanted to persecute believers in Damascus.

*Training: Endurance Food for Serious Tentmakers*, Derek Christiansen.

The author focuses on training in this article. In order to avoid the tentmaker fall-out and increase effectiveness, missionaries must be prepared both theologically and with cross-cultural skills. The modern tentmaker movement knows a lot about attrition. Most have been high on enthusiasm, short on equipment, strong on ideals and weak on training. The author believes if the training for tentmaking becomes more effective, then the attrition rate will be lower. Tentmaking as a movement is short on serious and systematic attempts to equip the marketplace workforce.

*Tent making: The Life and Work of Business as Missions*, Patrick Lai.

Patrick Lai's focus is on what has been proven to be effective in tentmaking, supported by his experience and research. He is also very practical in his approach to pragmatism to see God's kingdom spread as people around the world come to know Jesus. This book is inspirational, practical and Biblical. Some parts deal with such issues as tentmaking vs. "traditional" missions, types of tentmaking, preparing to be a tentmaker, evangelism and church planting, the tentmaker's personal life, women and tentmaking, the tentmaker and his children, the tentmaker and his home base, tentmaking tensions and conflicts and more. This book is a good resource. The author defines tentmaking and helps the reader get an understanding of what tentmaking is all about.

Pricilla and Aquila, Paul's Firm Friends and Model Tentmakers, Mans Ramsted



The author covers the biblical account of Pricilla and Aquila as a whole. They became Paul's ministry partners because of their similar professional skills. Their skills were crucial to having a legitimate existence in Corinth. They were foreigners and their careers provided them with an effective way to make friends. People were able to identify with them. Traditional missionaries often find their most difficult task to be making friendships that have ministry potential. Tentmakers do not have this problem, because their work naturally puts them in contact with many people. The author also encourages tentmakers to have a goal to disciple and evangelize by praying, strategizing, working and returning for evaluation.

*The Vital Role of Tent making in Paul's Mission Strategy*, Ruth Siemens.

The author examines Paul's method of teaching and the role his tentmaking plays in his ministry. There are reasons why Paul used tentmaking as a part of his ministry strategy. The author of this article says that tentmaking in itself cannot assure the success of missionary efforts. That would be asking more than it can provide. Many other factors contributed to Paul's success, such as his holy life, thorough teaching, the Holy Spirit's power, willingness to suffer risk, his prayer life, etc. But clearly, Paul's manual labor as a tentmaker made a great contribution to his overall strategy. He would not have dedicated the better part of many days making tents had it not been a vital part of his mission strategy.

*Why Did Paul Make Tents?*, Ruth Siemens.

This is a study of tentmaking that focuses on the practices of the Apostle Paul. The author gives practical insights and suggestions on how to get involved in tentmaking. Siemens explores Paul's model and asks questions. How much did Paul work? What was Paul's strategy and how

effective was it? What are the implications for believers today? What value does Paul's strategy have for Christians today?

*From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, Ruth Tucker.

This is a great book on the history of missions. Ruth Tucker starts with the apostle Paul and works her way into the 1980s. She writes in a very easy-to-read style. The book includes many amazing stories about amazing people who desired to bring the gospel to the "ends of the earth". Most of these men and women were faithful, effective missionaries. Other missionaries have been faithful but ineffective. Tucker's book includes several missionaries in history that were tentmaking missionaries and the skill was used to fund their ministry.

*The Fourth Dimension of Missions: Strategy*, Peter Wagner.

Wagner develops four strategies: the right goals, the right time and place, the right methods and the right people. The right goal is the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The right time at the right place means that some peoples of the world are receptive to the gospel, while others are resistant. He says the world's soils must be tested. The tight methods means that when there is much work and little or no fruit, something is wrong. Careful analysis will usually pinpoint the trouble as either working in an unripe field, or working in a ripe field, but using the wrong methods. The right people means that God brings the harvest to ripeness, but He does not harvest it. He uses Christian people to accomplish that task and He is glorified when His people "bear much fruit" (John 15:8).

*Perspectives on the World Christian*, Ralph Winters and Steven Hawthorne.

This book is a collection of readings, broken into four major sections, focuses on the biblical, cultural, historical and strategic dimensions of the task of world evangelization. Over 70

authors provide the reader with an introduction to the history and potential of the World Christian Movement. These articles are written by authors such as Brother Andrew, Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Greg Boyd, John Piper, John R. W. Stott, Hudson Taylor and many other excellent authors. This book will bring out the emotions of the reader as he reads through the volume. The student will read diverse accounts of the Christian experience around the world as found in no other book. This book helps the student break out of a very limited frame of reference, and really opens eyes to the state of the world.

## **Money**

*Wealth: Is It Worth It?*, S. Truett Cathy

*Wealth: Is It Worth It?* by Truett Cathy, describes his early life and the lessons he learned from growing up during the Great Depression. He learned how to work hard, be honest and to respect others. He and his brother opened a small restaurant in 1946. Twenty years later he opened his first Chick-fil-A restaurant. He began to experience success as he put the things he learned earlier in life into practice. His restaurant served the first boneless breast chicken sandwich, and it was the first fast-food restaurant to open in shopping malls. There are more than 1,000 Chick-fil-A restaurants. Chick-fil-A is closed on Sundays.

*Good To Great*, Jim Collins.

Collins and his researchers began by going through a list of companies, searching for the ones that saw great improvements in their performance over a certain period of time. They chose eleven companies and found some that had things in common that were different from what most companies' idea of successful business practices. These successful companies do not have a

well-known leader, they do not have the latest technology, they do not have innovative managers or the best business plan. These companies place a high value on the people who are asked to join their companies. The thinking, actions and culture of the companies are disciplined and different.

## **Ethics**

*Bribery and Corruption*, Thomas, Schirrmacher

The author provides an example of a bribe he offered and then begins to talk about it. He gave the bribe in a foreign country but also relates it to his own country and how the rejection of God causes the individual to abandon his ideals of justice due to the lust of money and power. The God of the Bible is impartial. He points out that corruption always involves individuals, but it is always an evil, which involves a whole net of evil structures. These evils can destroy a whole society, when the leaders of the church, the economy, and the state are devoured by it.

*Bribes*, Dan Graves

Graves offers an illustration of bribes and claims that both the giver and the receiver are at fault in a bribe. Some people think they can bribe their way to success. He quotes A. W. Tozer, who summed up the idea this way: “Apart from God, nothing matters. People think that health matters, or knowledge, or art or civilization. And but for one insistent word, they would matter indeed. That word is eternity.” This does not mean there is no place for presents.

## **Partnerships**

*How To Win Friends And Influence People*, Dale Carnegie

Dale Carnegie explains that by catering to the other person's highest principles, you can make a friend out of just about anyone. A person's name is the sweetest sound to someone's own ear so when you remember the other person's name, let the other person talk the most, and talk about their interests, you will influence other people. This book has many good insights into human nature which is definitely an important concept when working with others every day.

*The 17 Laws of Teamwork*, John Maxwell.

Maxwell talks to the team member and encourages each team member to become in order to have an effective team. Each member has a certain role and will be a leader in certain areas. Like his other books, Maxwell offers many illustrations to help explain his points. He offers seventeen laws for an effective team. Each law has additional parts with one or two examples. Because he includes questions and assignments, this also serves as a workbook to help the team member to apply the lessons to their situation.

*Interdependence and Partnership in Mission: An International Perspective*, Douglas Leroy

Leroy makes the observation that the West is no longer the center of the Christian faith. The church has grown in increasing numbers in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Now, the missionary force is changing. Fifty-one percent of all missionaries are currently from non-Western countries. He thinks this trend will probably continue. He believes Globalization began with the European colonization of the Western Hemisphere and Africa. With World War II, the speed of globalization accelerated. Unprecedented numbers of American GIs had seen foreign countries. This exposure led to international business and international missions, and the emerging age of modern technology and global communications expanded. These phenomena

have created a global village where no culture can remain isolated any longer. He believes the church has been impacted the most by globalization. This has forced missions to be more interdependent.

### **Bible Verses Review**

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus started the church by gathering His disciples. The rock on which Jesus would build his church is Jesus himself. Jesus then revealed Peter's identity and role. Later, Peter reminds Christians that they are the church built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone (1 Peter 2:4-6). All believers are joined into this church by faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, the same faith that Peter expressed.

Matthew 28:18–20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47-48, John 20:21, Acts 1:8. These verses give the church the Great Commission before Acts 2 took place. When people come to Christ in Acts 2 new believers were added to the church that was already started. When people open their heart to Christ and follow Him the result is a birth of a church, fellowship or assembly of believers.

Acts 18:3. This is the only verse that refers to Paul as a tentmaker. If it were not for this one verse it would not be known what he did as his manual labor. Other places say that Paul worked a job and labored but this single verse explains that he made tents.

1 Corinthians 9:17–18. These verses refer to the freedom that came along with Paul's labor. He was free from the accusation from those who would claim that he was taking advantage of churches, requiring that they support him. Paul asserted that he had the freedom to do anything, but in 9:24-27 he emphasized a life of strict discipline. His life consisted of both freedom and discipline. The goals of Paul's life were to glorify God and bring people to Christ.

To do this he had to stay free of any material entanglement that might sidetrack him, while strictly disciplining himself to carry out his goal. Paul viewed both freedom and discipline as important tools to be used in God's service.

Acts 20:34–35, 1 Corinthians 4:12, 9:6–12, 2 Corinthians 11:9, 1 Thessalonians 2:9, 2 Thessalonians 3:8–9. These verses refer to the importance Paul puts on working and labor. Some people in the church were falsely teaching that they should quit working and just wait for the Lord, because Christ would return any day. However, their lack of activity only led them into sin. They became a burden to the church which was supporting them, they wasted time that could have been used for helping others, and they became meddlers (3:11). Paul tells them to be responsible and get back to work.

Acts 13:2–3. While every member in the church at Antioch was to lead people to Christ, they only officially sent out certain ones to other parts of the world for the specific task of sharing the gospel, training leaders, and planting churches. The church dedicated Barnabas and Saul to the work God had for them. To *dedicate* means “to set apart” for a special purpose.

John 21:15–17. Jesus questioned Peter 3 times with the same question and wanted to know his priorities. Three times Jesus asked Peter if he loved him. When Peter answered yes, Jesus told him to feed his sheep. The real test was to show Paul's willingness to serve Christ. Peter had repented, and here Jesus was asking him to commit his life. Peter's life changed when he finally realized who Jesus was and his purpose on earth. His occupation changed from fisherman to evangelist.

II Timothy 2:4. When income increases there are always hidden dangers. The tentmaker would do well to guard against allowing the business to become anything more than a vehicle or tool to help them serve God in a greater way. Paul used comparisons with soldiers, athletes, and farmers who must discipline themselves and be willing to sacrifice to achieve their desired results. Soldiers have to give up worldly security and endure rigorous discipline. Athletes must train hard and follow the rules. Farmers must work extremely hard and be patient.

Jeremiah 9:23. Wealth in anyone's life often leads to pride. People tend to admire three things about others: wisdom, power, and riches. However, God puts a higher priority on knowing Him personally and living a life that reflects his justice, righteousness, and love.

Ecclesiastes 10:19. People think money can meet all their needs. They throw money at problems and think they will be solved. Scripture recognizes that money is necessary for survival, but it warns against the love of money. Money is dangerous because it deceives a person into thinking that wealth is the easiest way to achieve everything desired. The love of money is to trust money rather than God to solve problems. Those who pursue its empty promises will one day discover that they have nothing because they are spiritually bankrupt.

I Timothy 6:9–10. Money is not evil. Paul says that the love of money is at the root of all evil. Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, most people still believe that money brings happiness. Rich people craving greater riches can be caught in an endless cycle that only ends in ruin and destruction. In the surrounding verses Paul gives guidelines for staying out of the trap of loving money.



Matthew 6:33. To “seek the Kingdom of God above all else” means to put God first in all of life. Believers are to fill their thoughts with His desires, to take His character as an example, and serve and obey Him in everything. People, objects, goals, and other desires all compete for priority. God must have first place in *every* area of life and He promises to take care of all other areas.

James 2:26. By faith, Abel “offered” a sacrifice, Noah “prepared” an ark, and Abraham “obeyed” the Lord. Faith, apart from obedience, is dead. Biblical faith also acts. James says that Abraham was “shown to be right with God” for what he *did* because he *believed* God (Romans 4:1-5). James and Paul are not contradicting but complementing to each other. True faith always results in good deeds, but the deeds do not justify anyone. Faith brings salvation; active obedience demonstrates that faith is genuine.

Hebrews 11:1,6. The beginning point of faith is believing in God’s character. God *is* who he says. The end point is believing in God’s promises. He will *do* what He says. When believers believe that God will fulfill His promises, even though they are not always seen fulfilled, true faith is demonstrated. Faith also includes prayer, patience, and planning. Faith is the confidence that what is hoped for will actually happen; it gives assurance about things that cannot be seen. The only way to please God is by faith, but it is not just a mental conviction.

1 Corinthians 16:9. Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying that, potentially, a great work could be done in Ephesus. Then he mentioned that he was up against a great deal of opposition. Most people would have seen a reason to leave but Paul’s reasoning was that Satan was trying so hard because there was a great opportunity to see people come to Christ.

Luke 16:8. Jesus did not mean to commend his dishonesty. It was a commendation of his shrewdness or forethought. The children of this world are those who are devoted to this world. They live only for this world. They are careful primarily to obtain property, and to provide for their temporal necessities. This way of living does not mean that these people are particularly wicked, but only that they are world-minded and anxious about earthly things. They are wiser, more prudent, cunning, and anxious about their particular earthly matters. They show more skill, study more plans, and contrive more ways to provide for themselves, than the children of light do to promote the kingdom of God.

1 Timothy 5:17. It is biblical for a church to take extra special care of their minister financially. Faithful church leaders should be supported and appreciated. Too often they are targets for criticism because the congregation has unrealistic expectations. They must receive enough financial support to allow them to live without worry and to provide for the needs of their families. Jesus and Paul emphasized the importance of supporting those who lead and teach God's Word.

Luke 16:31. Refers to the sufficiency of God's Word. The rich man wanted someone to come back from the dead and tell his brothers. Jesus said that if they did not believe Moses and the prophets, not even a resurrection would convince them. They were set in their ways, and neither Scripture nor God's Son himself would shake them loose.

Luke 19:40. Refers to the responsibility believers have to tell others about Him. The Pharisees thought the crowd's words about Christ were sacrilegious and blasphemous. So, they asked Jesus to keep his people quiet. But Jesus said that if the people were quiet, the stones

would burst into cheers. Jesus was not setting up a powerful political kingdom but because he was establishing God's eternal Kingdom, he had a reason for the greatest celebration of all.

Proverbs 10:22. This is an encouragement for the new missionary. When the Lord is not in a situation, the way to the solution is often more difficult than necessary. When the Lord is not in goals pursued, then health, family, and reputations can often be forfeited. Unnecessary sorrow and heartache accompany that path. When the Lord is in a situation, things will always fall into place according to His plan.

Luke 10:25–37. Money is not evil. The good Samaritan had enough money to help others. How many people could pay for another person's month stay in a hotel or hospital? Jesus commended the good Samaritan who used his money to help others. Jesus nor Paul condemns wealth.

1 Corinthians 13:4–7. This is the Love Chapter. Three things will last forever – Faith, Hope, and Love, but the greatest of these is Love. Tentmakers first motivation is their love for the Lord. If they do it for any other reason it will be meaningless. Out of their service for the Lord comes their love for others. Most tentmakers are leaders and leaders must lead in a loving way.

Acts 19:12 This verse promotes the labors of Paul. He used handkerchiefs and aprons in his work and when those objects that had touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled. It is as if God is showing his approval of Paul's labor by using them to do great miracles.

## CHAPTER 2

### PAUL - THE TENTMAKER

There is a missions strategy that God included in His word that was used by the first missionaries sent out by their church. Today, this strategy is not very popular and therefore underutilized. This strategy has many advantages and takes away some of the excuses Christians have for not carrying out the Great Commission. It is a little controversial because it involves money, but could help to subsidize the missionary's income and fund projects. This strategy could also be used to help missionaries enter into countries otherwise closed to the gospel and help them stay there longer. It enables missionaries to get closer to the people they desire to reach. This strategy is known as a "Tentmaking" missions strategy and it was the apostle Paul who pioneered and worked this strategy.

The only place in the Bible referring to Paul as a tentmaker is found in one verse. "Paul lived and worked with them, for they were tentmakers just as he was" (Acts 18:3). Paul joined two Jews named Aquila, and his wife, Priscilla because he was trained in the same craft. The Greek term for tentmaker refers to activities in cloth and leather. He regularly earned his living at this trade during his missionary journeys (2 Cor 11:7-10).<sup>1</sup> Paul offers missionaries an example of a powerful strategy for world missions, known as tentmaking (2 Thes 3:7).

When Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, he was rescued from the rioting mob because he invoked his rights as a Roman citizen. The Bible does not record Paul's early history, but for him to be a Roman citizen by birth, his family had to have been Roman citizens. His Jewish family

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<sup>1</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1988), 2092.

may have been awarded Roman citizenship because they helped the Roman army by making tents.<sup>2</sup> If this was the situation then their family tentmaking business probably made the best tents available. There must have been higher and lower qualities of tentmaking. Paul learned the higher quality, and he could also work at the common qualities when circumstances required.<sup>3</sup> Travelers may have used the type of tents that Paul made. In addition, because he traveled so much, he probably used the tents that he made himself.<sup>4</sup>

This indicates that Paul's family was probably wealthy. This may explain his privileged education and ability to naturally reach the upper class (Acts 17:12; Rom 16:23).<sup>5</sup> Paul claims to know how to live on almost nothing and how to live with everything (Phil 4:12). Jewish religious teachers and Rabbis were to have a trade or skill of some kind outside of their religious service. This was to keep teachers from becoming a burden on society. They also wanted to have something to fall back on during hard times.<sup>6</sup> Before Paul met Jesus on the Damascus Road he was a Pharisee, teaching and enforcing strict adherence to the law (Phil 3:5). Jewish fathers

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<sup>2</sup> F.F. Bruce, *Paul Apostle Of The Heart Set Free*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 37–38.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen White, "The Apostle Paul and Manual Labor (part 1)," *Bible Prophecy | Online Bible Studies | Videos | WorldsLastChance.com*, February 11, 1990, <http://www.worldslastchance.com/updates/the-apostle-paul-and-manual-labor-part-1.html>, (accessed November 16, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Simon J. Kistemaker and William Hendriksen, vol. 17, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 646–50.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Hunt, "Saint Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles," *Agape Bible Study*, 2008, [http://www.agapebiblestudy.com/documents/Saint\\_Paul\\_Apostle\\_to\\_the\\_Gentiles.htm](http://www.agapebiblestudy.com/documents/Saint_Paul_Apostle_to_the_Gentiles.htm), (accessed November 13, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> W. J. Rayment, "Biography - The Apostle Paul!" *Bible Study Resource Center*, 2011, <http://www.biblestudyinfo.com/paul/biography.shtml>, (accessed November 13, 2011).

taught their sons the family trade, which remained in the family for many generations. Zebedee taught his sons James and John how to fish. Jesus learned how to be a carpenter from Joseph in his workshop in Nazareth, and Paul was trained by his father in Tarsus in the trade of tentmaking, and probably the art of working with leather. The tools needed for this craft were relatively few in number and could easily be taken along wherever Paul went. Many rabbis supported themselves by performing manual labor in the trade they had learned in their youth.<sup>7</sup>

Paul must have had some sort of status or connections. It is possible that his family was well connected among the aristocracy in Jerusalem, permitting them to obtain the services of Gamaliel as a teacher for the young Paul. This may also explain why he was able to obtain an audience with the High Priest for permission to travel to Damascus to find and persecute those who were followers of Jesus.<sup>8</sup>

It seems that Paul worked a tentmaking job to support himself on all three of his missionary journeys. On Paul's first journey, his partner was Barnabas. Paul asked the question, "Or is it only Barnabas and I who have to work to support ourselves?" (1 Cor 9:6).

Paul traveled to Macedonia and Greece on his second missionary journey because he received an urgent call to help the Macedonians (Acts 16:9). He stopped in a few cities, including Thessalonica, but because of persecution, he traveled to Athens. He asked the church in both letters to the Thessalonians if they remembered how he worked day and night (1 Thes 2:9; 2 Thes 3:8). When he realized that his work in Athens had come to a stop, he went to

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<sup>7</sup> Kistemaker and Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, 646–50.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Hengel, "Acts 9 – Was Paul from a Wealthy Family? « Reading Acts," Reading Acts, 2011, <http://readingacts.wordpress.com/2011/02/14/acts-9-was-paul-from-a-wealthy-family/>, (accessed November 16, 2011).

Corinth, the population of which was estimated to be two hundred thousand. Corinth was a thriving commercial center with a harbor at each end of the land that connected them to Athens. Goods were transported from one harbor to the other along a specially constructed stone corridor. From Paul's perspective, Corinth was an ideal mission center from which the gospel could be spread by ships going east and west.<sup>9</sup>

The commercial interests of Corinth flourished and attracted many Jews, who constructed a synagogue in this city. The residents of Corinth worshiped Aphrodite, the goddess of love, and in the name of religion became very immoral. Corinth had many temple prostitutes, who worked for the religious authorities of the city. Throughout the Mediterranean world, the expression to "Corinthianize" (to live immorally) became a byword. In God's plan, Corinth became one of the places where Paul had to preach the gospel and establish a church.<sup>10</sup>

When Paul arrived in Corinth, he probably looked for a contact with the local synagogue authorities and found lodging with a Jew named Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. Aquila and Priscilla arrived in Corinth after Claudius' expelled the Jews from Rome. This is where they met Paul and began working together. They appear to have been entrepreneurial manufacturers and traders in tents, and moved from place to place.<sup>11</sup> Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla had more in common than being Jews and knowing the trade of tentmaking. All three were Christians and Aquila and Priscilla had recently come to Corinth from Rome. Some time later, however, Jews

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<sup>9</sup> Kistemaker and Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, 646–50.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> John Sundberg, "We Need More Aquilas and Priscillas," *A Light in the Darkness*, <http://alightinthedarkness.wordpress.com/2009/08/23/we-need-more-aquilas-and-priscillas/>, (accessed November 14, 2011).

and Christians returned, as is evident from the travels of Aquila and Priscilla (Rom 16:3–5).

Aquila and Priscilla were most likely Christians when they left Rome. Paul does not consider them his first converts in Achaia (I Cor 16:15). In addition, when Paul was looking for a place to stay in Corinth, he probably wanted to stay with Christians. The three of them probably formed the nucleus of the Corinthian church.<sup>12</sup> Paul traveled with Aquila and Priscilla, his tentmaking partners, to Ephesus and then he returned to Jerusalem and Antioch for a period (Acts 18:18–21). Paul left them there when he returned to Jerusalem and that ended his second missionary journey.

Paul must have thoroughly taught the Bible to Aquila and Priscilla while they made tents together because they were fully capable of discipling and instructing others in the truth. While Paul was gone, a Jew named Apollos arrived in Ephesus from the city of Alexandria in Egypt. He was an eloquent speaker who knew the Scriptures well. He had been taught the way of the Lord, and he taught others about Jesus with accuracy and enthusiasm. However, he only knew about John's baptism. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him preaching boldly in the synagogue, they took him aside and explained the way of God even more accurately. Apollos traveled to Corinth and proved to be a great benefit to those who had believed. He was able to refute the Jews with powerful arguments in public debate. He was able to use the Scriptures, and explain to them that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 19:24–28). Apollos was able to be used by the Lord in a great way because of the teaching and discipling he received from Aquila and Priscilla. Aquila and Priscilla were able to teach and disciple Apollos because Paul poured his life into them while they made tents together.

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<sup>12</sup> Kistemaker and Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, 646–50.



During his third missionary journey, Paul returned to Ephesus and spent most of his time there. He taught God's Word in the lecture hall of Tyrannus every day for two years (Acts 19:9). He probably did this during the midafternoon break, when the day was at its hottest. This theory strongly suggests that Paul worked his tentmaking job to support himself in the mornings, taught the Bible to a large group of people in the hall during the afternoons, and again taught the Bible house to house in the evenings.<sup>13</sup> Paul was teaching late one night when one of those in attendance fell out of a window, died, and Paul brought him back to life (Acts 20:9–10).

Three months after Paul arrived in Ephesus, he left the synagogue, along with all his disciples and decided to rent a hall from a philosopher named Tyrannus (Acts 19:8–10). Philosopher Tyrant (which is what his name means) probably used the hall from 7:00 to 11:00 A.M. During that time in the morning, Paul may have worked as a tentmaker to earn support for himself and his companions. By 11:00 A.M. it was usually too hot to work, and Tyrannus would dismiss his pupils so they could go home and sleep from 11:00 A.M. to 4 P.M. or so. This was the common pattern in Ephesus. In fact, it was said that in Ephesus there would be more people sleeping at 1:00 P.M. than at 1:00 A.M.<sup>14</sup>

The Holy Spirit was at work in Paul but was also working in some of the people of Ephesus. They began to come to the lecture hall of Tyrannus during Paul's classes and say, "Paul, we don't want to sleep now. Could you speak to us about the gospel?" Paul kept up this schedule

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<sup>13</sup> Siemens, "Why Did Paul Make Tents?"

<sup>14</sup> P. G. Mathew, "Paul's Miraculous Ministry in Ephesus," Grace Valley Christian Center, 1995, [http://www.gracevalley.org/sermon\\_trans/1999/Pauls\\_Miraculous\\_Ministry\\_in\\_Ephesus.html](http://www.gracevalley.org/sermon_trans/1999/Pauls_Miraculous_Ministry_in_Ephesus.html), (accessed November 17, 2011).

for two years. And every day, after teaching in the lecture hall, he would go from house to house to minister to the believers of Ephesus.<sup>15</sup>

Because the Bible does not offer the information, missionaries can only speculate about Paul's ministry and business connections in Ephesus. Paul may have been able to use the lecture hall of Tyrannus because of his business connections in the community. Tyrannus, or whoever owned this lecture hall, did not feel threatened by Paul's large audience meeting there daily and probably appreciated how much Paul was helping the reputation of the lecture hall. Paul did hinder some businesses such as the making of sorcery books that the people burned when they began to follow Christ (Acts 19:19).

While Tyrannus was conducting lessons, Paul was stitching leather. The handkerchiefs of Paul were actually sweatbands. Stitching leather was hot work! It was also hard work. Paul wore a leather apron to protect his thighs from the sewing needle. Why did God use Paul's sweatbands and aprons to heal the sick? It was so different from the practices of sorcerers and exorcists. It may be significant that God worked through the objects that represented Paul's honest labor. It was safe for God to do miracles through Paul. He never boasted about being able to perform miracles and rarely mentions miracles in his letters. Paul's priority was to preach the gospel.<sup>16</sup> It was if God was endorsing Paul's tentmaking missions strategy by using objects that represented Paul's labor, to perform miracles.

Paul knew he had the right to take support from churches, but he did not take advantage of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, P. G. Mathew, "Paul's Miraculous Ministry in Ephesus."

<sup>16</sup> John Reed, "Paul's Two Years in Ephesus," J. Reed's Christian Expositions, <http://www.jrtalks.com/acts/acts19v8to12.html>, (accessed November 17, 2011).

this right (1 Cor 9:12). Leaders, such as James and Peter, were supported by churches twenty years into their ministries and Paul said he also had this right, but did not use it (1 Cor 9:5). He taught churches to take care of their leaders and even give them double the pay for their hard work (1 Tm 6:17). It was the churches in Macedonia that are recorded as having given Paul a gift (Phil 4:15). Paul accepted gifts, but it seems that he mainly relied on his tentmaking jobs for his income. Paul said his missionary policy and practice was to be financially independent (1 Cor 9:12, 15, 18).

God's Word has plainly stated that "those who proclaim the gospel should make their living from the gospel" (1 Cor 9:14; Mt 10:10; Lk 10:7; 1 Tm 5:18). Paul speaks about his own situation and has no intention of issuing an apostolic decree. The apostles in Jerusalem gave themselves completely to prayer and the ministry of the Word of God (Acts 6:2, 4). In a sense, they set the example for a full-time ministry that is free from material pressure.<sup>17</sup> However, Paul's tentmaking strategy became a vehicle for teaching the Word of God to people who have not yet heard the message of salvation.

Even though Paul had the God-given right to receive support from those who benefited from his ministry (1 Cor 9:6–14), there were times when believers were unwilling or unable to provide support (Phil 4:13–17). Paul's tentmaking business became necessary. He showed that there may be times when taking support might confuse the matter of God's gift of salvation (1 Cor 9:15–19). As Christ's servant, Paul graciously refused support and took up tentmaking while

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<sup>17</sup> Kistemaker and Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, 646–50.

continuing to preach the Word.<sup>18</sup>

Paul did not want any of his actions to hinder the gospel in any way. He did not want to appear as a salesman or a politician and he did not want to be controlled by anyone but Christ. Paul's strategy was well planned (1 Cor 3:10). His tentmaking missionary strategy protected him from these false accusations, paid for his ministry, and put him in close contact with the people he wanted to reach.<sup>19</sup>

Paul's tentmaking mission strategy was an example to those he led to Christ (Acts 20:35). Believers saw how a Christian should live outside the church. He taught them to work with their hands and earn money honestly. His tentmaking strategy created a force of unpaid evangelists. Church growth in this day and age requires a large force of unpaid evangelists.<sup>20</sup> Paul said he never accepted food from anyone without paying for it and worked hard day and night so he would not be a burden to anyone. He certainly had the right to ask them to feed him and his team, but he wanted to give them an example to follow (2 Thes 3:9).

Bi-vocational pastors work in the world, side-by-side with people who are lost, un-churched, and looking for hope. The world really sees and watches the bi-vocational minister. They have opportunities to connect with their own congregations in unique ways. Church members have to go to a "real" job every day and face uncertainties of promotions, raises, and

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<sup>18</sup> Tod Kennedy, "Tent Making," Spokane Bible Church, (2000), <http://www.spokanebiblechurch.com/study/Bible%20Doctrines/tent-making.htm>, (accessed June 16, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Siemens, "Why Did Paul Make Tents?" 4.

<sup>20</sup> Siemens, "The Vital Role of Tentmaking in Paul's Mission Strategy," 121.

even loss of job and so do bi-vocational pastors.<sup>21</sup>

Several benefits come from ministries lead by bi-vocational ministers. First, they breed congregational participation. Full-time ministers can actually encourage passivity in a congregation. Second, they guard against excessive organization and programming. Bi-vocational ministers do not have time to strategize programs. They can engage their communities instead of perfecting a performance for the Sunday ‘event.’ Third, they foster church cultures that are outward focused. Bi-vocational ministries are pushed outward from the center of the church. Because the minister spends most of their week in the workplace, he has a different mindset than other pastors. Ministry is naturally shaped around what is going on “out there.” A missional lifestyle is modeled for the congregation.<sup>22</sup>

There seems to be a perception that a division exists between full-time pastor and the lay member, between the sacred and secular, but this is not according to the Bible.<sup>23</sup> The Bible exhorts every believer to glorify God in all they do. The believer’s life is not to be compartmentalized. Even the term “bi-vocational” suggests two separate lives. Bi-vocational ministers do not see a separation between their two jobs. The job gives an entrance into the community to meet people who would normally never set foot inside a church. Working a

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<sup>21</sup> James, “Bi-vocational Pastors and the Mission,” A Modern Onesimus, <http://amodernonesimus.com/2011/03/22/bi-vocational-pastors-and-the-mission/>, (accessed June 19, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> David Fitch, “Bi-vocational – or – go on staff at a large church: Suddenly bi-vocational ministry doesn’t look so bad?,” Reclaiming the Mission, (2009), <http://www.reclaimingthemission.com/bi-vocational-or-go-on-staff-at-a-large-church-suddenly-bi-vocational-ministry-doesnt-look-so-bad/>, (accessed June 20, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Jon Zens, “The “Clergy/Laity” Distinction: A Help or a Hindrance to the Body of Christ?” Searching Together, (1996), <http://www.searchingtogether.org/articles/clergy/laity.htm>, (accessed August 28, 2011).

second job gives opportunities to teach members how to find meaning in “ordinary” jobs.

Churches are filled with people who are discontent with their work and who rarely think of their jobs as places where they can participate in the Kingdom of God.<sup>24</sup>

Paul’s tentmaking missionary strategy also gave him freedom. Philosophers of his day either accepted fees, worked for a wealthy person, begged, or worked to support themselves. Paul defined his ministry by first talking about his freedom (1 Cor 9:1).<sup>25</sup> He was free to say what needed to be said. He was free from the accusations that come when gifts and offerings are involved. Paul’s speech and his work set him apart from all other speakers of his day. His freedom was God’s gift and yet, subject to the gospel.

However, it was not going to matter which missions strategy Paul used, he was never going to silence his critics. If he accepted support from the churches that he had started, he would have been accused of taking advantage of them. When he refused to ask his churches to support his mission and chose to work the tentmaking job, he was still criticized for doing manual labor. The critics thought tentmaking was appropriate for slaves, but not for free citizens. Manual laborers were looked down upon by the upper class. Greek culture actually measured the importance and value of a philosopher by the fee he could command. The more he could command, the more

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<sup>24</sup> Chris Brown, “Sacred Space: Why I’m Bi-Vocational,” Presbymergent, (2009), <http://presbymergent.org/2009/08/13/sacred-space-why-im-bi-vocational/>, (accessed June 25, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> Lincoln E. Galloway, “Preaching freedom to the Corinthians,” *Homiletic* 29, no. 1, (June 1, 2004): 15–23. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost, (accessed November 13, 2011).

valuable he was.<sup>26</sup>

Paul connected his tentmaking job with his ministry. He incorporated work and witness.<sup>27</sup> He reminded the Thessalonians, “Night and day working . . . we proclaimed . . . to you the gospel of God” (1 Thes 2:9). This probably means that Paul talked to people while he worked and then, during part of the day, he laid aside his work clothes and tools and taught the gospel (Acts 19:9–11). His lifestyle was characterized by both work and preaching.<sup>28</sup> It seems that his tentmaking missions strategy doubled his evangelistic efforts.

Paul seemed to be a tough businessperson with a strong work ethic. He was zealous in hunting down and persecuting followers of the “Way.” He did not put up with quitters, like John Mark. He quarreled with Barnabas and broke up their team. He confronted Peter to his face about his hypocrisy. He seemed to be very task oriented in the early part of his ministry. Paul was a businessperson who tirelessly served his heavenly Father.

When it comes to persistence, and getting the job done at any cost, Christians could learn something from the world. “The rich man had to admire the dishonest rascal for being so shrewd. And it is true that the children of this world are more shrewd in dealing with the world around them than are the children of the light” (Lk 16:8). He was admired, not for his character but his cleverness, not for his dishonesty but his resourcefulness, and not for his fraud but for his

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<sup>26</sup> John MacArthur, “Marks of a True Apostle: Humility,” *Grace to You*, November 9, 1997, <http://www.gty.org/resources/Sermons/47-75>, (accessed November 18, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Siemens, “The Vital Role of Tentmaking in Paul’s Mission Strategy,” 121.

<sup>28</sup> Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 925–27.

foresight.<sup>29</sup> The worldly person who does not know God will often go to any length to be successful in all aspects of life. Usually the motivated worldly businessperson will not take no for an answer. If the door is closed they will try to find another opening.

Jesus told this story about the unjust steward and in some ways, He gave a pattern for Christians. The steward's conduct was dishonest, and yet, Christ says, "Do like that!" The explanation is to be found mainly in considering how the steward misused his master's resources, compared to how Christians use earthly gifts, and possessions, for eternal purposes. There is also another reason Jesus uses the steward's conduct as an example. This man is praised for his foresight, for clearly realizing the facts of his situation, for his prompt action, and for the kind of wisdom he possessed. So, Jesus said if Christians will look at the means, methods, and actions of this man and not only the ends, the world would be able to teach the Church many great lessons. It would be well for the Church if its members lived in the same way as the people of the world. Jesus points out the qualities and the wisdom of the unjust steward's actions without giving approval for his evil purposes. People without Christ are only limited to this life, but Jesus said that in this life "the children of this world are wiser than the children of light."<sup>30</sup>

Believers are not always as resourceful when the way is not easy. Many believers lack a sense of urgency. Maybe it is because believers lack a wholehearted commitment and do not sufficiently value God's calling. Maybe believers are sitting and waiting for the Master's return

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<sup>29</sup> John G. Butler, "Analytical Bible Expositor Vol.11," (Clinton, Iowa: LBC Publications, 2009), 314.

<sup>30</sup>Alexander Maclaren, Expositions of Holy Scripture, Accordance electronic ed. (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 2006).



but not treating this life seriously enough.<sup>31</sup> Believers give up too soon instead of looking for other ways.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying that, potentially, a great work could be done in Ephesus, then he mentioned that he was up against so much opposition. Most people would have seen a reason to leave but Paul reasoned that if Satan was opposing that hard then there was probably a great opportunity to see people come the Christ.<sup>32</sup>

Paul had enemies used by Satan to try to stop him from preaching the gospel, but the opposition did not stop Paul from the opportunity. He was not going to hurry his departure but would stay and enter the door of effective influence. As often as there is good, evil arises against it at the same time.<sup>33</sup> G. Campbell Morgan said, “If you have no opposition in the place you serve, you’re serving in the wrong place.”<sup>34</sup>

Few missionaries have been as tough as Paul was or worked harder. Paul was defending his ministry, credibility and apostleship, which included his manual labor. He said he served God and worked harder than others. He had been put in prison more than others, been whipped more

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<sup>31</sup> Doug Ward, PhD, “Understanding The Parable of The Unjust Steward,” GODWARD.org, <http://www.godward.org/Hebrew%20Roots/Feature%20Articles/unjuststeward%20parable.htm>, (accessed June 15, 2011).

<sup>32</sup> James Burton Coffman, “1 Corinthians 16,” Searching God’s Word, Coffman Commentaries, <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=1co&chapter=016>, (accessed September 17, 2011).

<sup>33</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, “The First Epistle to the Corinthians: a commentary on the Greek text,” (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 1330.

<sup>34</sup> John MacArthur, “Doing The Lord’s Work In The Lord’s Way,” 1 Corinthians 16:9–16, Grace To You, [http://www.gty.org/resources/Sermons/1887\\_Doing-the-Lords-Work-in-the-Lords-Way-Part-2#.TnsRHU9YI7o](http://www.gty.org/resources/Sermons/1887_Doing-the-Lords-Work-in-the-Lords-Way-Part-2#.TnsRHU9YI7o), (accessed September 19, 2011).

times than he could count, and faced death many times. Five different times, the Jewish leaders gave him thirty-nine lashes. Three times, he was beaten with rods. Once he was stoned. Three times he was shipwrecked. Once he spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. He traveled on many long journeys.

He faced danger from rivers and from robbers. He faced danger from his own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. He faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. He faced danger from men who claimed to be believers but were not. He worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. He had been hungry and thirsty and often went without food. He shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep him warm. Then, in addition to all that, he had the daily burden of concern for all the churches (2 Cor 11:23–29). His work was not just his church work.

Paul's missions strategy allowed him to become an insider within the community. Tentmakers are exposed to their communities in a greater way than even the missionary who is not involved in a tentmaking business. The tentmaker's work naturally puts him in contact with many people.<sup>35</sup> Tentmaking is about putting Jesus in front of those who have never heard the gospel. Tentmaking is using daily life strategies to tell others about Jesus.<sup>36</sup> The various aspects of this overlooked strategy used by Paul, such as the role that manual labor played in his ministry, must be examined. He would not have dedicated so much time and energy to make tents had this

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<sup>35</sup> Mans Ramsted, "Pricilla and Aquila, Paul's Firm Friends and Model Tentmakers," *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, 19, (2002): 28.

<sup>36</sup> Lai, "Tentmaking: The Life and Work of Business as Missions," 4.

not been a vital part of his mission strategy.<sup>37</sup>

His business or trade was not as much about expenses or obtaining a visa as much as it was about opportunity. His trade gave him regular day-to-day contact with merchants and travelers.<sup>38</sup> Paul said when he was with the Jews, he lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When he was with those who followed the Jewish law, he also lived under that law. Even though he was not subject to the law, he did this to bring those who were under the law to know Christ. When he was with the Gentiles who did not follow the Jewish law, he also lived apart from the law so he could bring them to Christ. He did not ignore the law of God but obeyed the law of Christ. When he was with those who were weak, he shared their weakness, because he wanted to bring the weak to Christ. He tried to find common ground with everyone, doing everything he could to save some. Everything Paul did was to spread the Good News and share in its blessings (1 Cor 9:20–23).

A tentmaking missionary also has access to restricted countries as a businessperson that a fully supported missionary will not have. About 80 percent of the world's population, including most unreached people groups, live in countries that do not allow Christians in as missionaries.<sup>39</sup>

Paul and his team started at least ten, and it may have been up to twenty churches during his ministry.<sup>40</sup> It is assumed in the New Testament, that every believer was a member of a local

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<sup>37</sup> Siemens, "The Vital Role of Tentmaking in Paul's Mission Strategy," 121.

<sup>38</sup> "What Is a Tentmaker?" Worldwide Tentmakers | Promoting, Preparing and Placing Witnesses, 2010.

<sup>39</sup> Siemens, "The Vital Role of Tent-making In Paul's Mission Strategy," 121.

<sup>40</sup> Neil Cole, "How Many Churches Did The Apostle Paul Start?" Cole-Slaw, September, 2011, <http://cole-slaw.blogspot.com/2011/09/how-many-churches-did-apostle-paul.html>, (accessed September 15, 2011).

assembly of believers and God has chosen believers to spread gospel. The local church is God's vehicle to reach a lost and dying world with His Good News. Biblical missions should result in new churches being established and growing, long after the missionary is gone. When people come to Christ, they gather to worship God, serve and encourage each other, and lead others to worship. Churches, like the church at Antioch, must send out missionaries, like they sent out Paul, if the world is going to hear the Good News about Jesus Christ.

Many missionaries have followed Paul's tentmaking missions strategy and have been blessed in their missionary efforts. In her book, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, Ruth Tucker shares the story of ninety-nine influential missionaries who affected world missions. She documents that twenty-three of the missionaries were tentmakers.<sup>41</sup>

William Carey was a cobbler, factory worker, professor, and translator. Hudson Taylor was a doctor. The Moravian missionaries worked alongside the locals and two of them sold themselves into slavery to take the gospel overseas.<sup>42</sup>

How effective was Paul's missions strategy? "So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect" (Acts 19:20). If the world is going to be reached for Christ, it is going to take those who are willing to rediscover a Biblical method of missions. Paul's tentmaking missions strategy was so effective that all of Asia minor and parts of Europe were

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<sup>41</sup> Lai, "Tentmaking: The Life and Work of Business as Missions," 11.

<sup>42</sup> Denny Kenaston, "The Radical Example of Moravian Missions," *Moravian*, October 2003, [http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0CDAQFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.charityministries.org%2Ftextonly%2Foctober2003-moravian.doc&ei=tSfTTvvh8jftgfY8KS4DQ&usg=AFQjCNHXo03k6Yc\\_QS-whUIep4lLayDKdQ](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0CDAQFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.charityministries.org%2Ftextonly%2Foctober2003-moravian.doc&ei=tSfTTvvh8jftgfY8KS4DQ&usg=AFQjCNHXo03k6Yc_QS-whUIep4lLayDKdQ), (accessed November 28, 2011).

evangelized. After two years in Ephesus, everyone throughout Asia had heard the word of the Lord (Acts 19:10). After years of ministry Paul said that he had already preached the gospel from Jerusalem to parts of Southern Europe and felt his ministry was finished in that present region. He desired to take the gospel further West and travel to Spain (Rom 15:19–24).<sup>43</sup>

The Lord equipped Paul with all that was necessary and positioned him with experiences, family status, and the skills to carry out the mission. On top of all this, believers are equipped with the privilege of prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul said he could do all things through Christ, which strengthened him (Phil 4:13).

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<sup>43</sup> James R. Coffman, “Romans - Coffman’s Commentary of the New Testament on SearchGodsWord.org,” SearchGodsWord.org, Bible Study Resources from HeartLight.org, 2001, <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=ro>, (accessed November 14, 2011).

## CHAPTER 3

### PRINCIPLES OF THE TENTMAKING BUSINESS

The principles of tentmaking will include a few controversial subjects. These principles surround money and ethical issues. There is always potential controversy when money is involved. This chapter will discuss some of the ethical situations that each missionary will face and before a decision is made, it must be run through the Biblical grid and not just cultural considerations. Morality and integrity will also be discussed in this chapter.

#### Money

The apostle Paul wrote half of the New Testament and had much to say about money but he never said that money is the root of all evil. If money were evil, everyone would be in trouble, because it is an evil that every person wants. He said that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tm 6:10). There is a big difference. In fact, just one chapter earlier in the letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul says that if a person will not care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, they are living like they have denied the true faith. This kind of person is worse than an unbeliever (1 Tm 5:8). How can a person provide and care for his own without money?

Jesus told all believers to be like the Good Samaritan, yet how many could afford to pay for a stranger's hospital treatment and housing for a week? The Samaritan was able to help because he had the financial means to do so. Without it, he could only have offered minor assistance. In the Old Testament, after Job endured his many trials and proved his devotion to God, he was given back twice his wealth and possessions. So was God rewarding Job's

righteousness with evil? Of course not! Like most things, money can be used for good or evil.<sup>1</sup>

Paul said that the love of money is powerful and destructive. “But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows” (1 Tm 6:9–10).

When income increases there are always hidden dangers. The tentmaker would do well to guard against allowing the business to become anything more than a vehicle or tool to help them serve God in a greater way. The Bible says, soldiers don’t get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them (2 Tm 2:4). The love of money, greed, and a change in priorities can cause the minister to get off track spiritually, but this can happen to any believer, not just the minister. Wealth in anyone’s life often leads to pride (Jer 9:23).<sup>2</sup>

Paul encourages believers to be generous and gives examples. He tries to challenge the Church at Corinth to learn how to give generously and gives them an example of the Macedonian Christians who gave generously even though they were extremely poor (2 Cor 8:2). Paul also wanted believers to view their jobs as a way of honoring God and earning money to be a blessing to others (1 Cor 9:18–19). Paul does not condemn riches or being rich. He does not say that Christians should be poor. He does tell the rich to do good, to be rich in good works, to be

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Paul Evans, “The Five Lessons A Millionaire Taught Me About Life And Wealth,” (New York: Simon& Schuster, 2006), 27.

<sup>2</sup> Kerby Anderson, “Wealth and Poverty,” Leadership University, August 2003, <http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/poverty.html>, (accessed August 30, 2011).

generous and ready to share (1 Tm 6:17–18).<sup>3</sup>

It is biblical for a church to take extra special care of their minister financially. Elders who do their work well should be respected and paid well, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching (1 Tm 5:17). Tentmakers should have a church behind them, supporting their efforts, both through prayers and finances, but it is not wrong to have a supplemental income. It is not wrong for the minister to make money.<sup>4</sup> The Bible is filled with men of God who had income producing occupations and were very wealthy. Preachers receive love offerings as guest speakers and some even write books that generate income.

There are scriptures to support that God wants believers to prosper in all areas of life. Believers are to “. . . delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night. They will be like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do” (Ps 1:2–3). God doesn’t want to be confined to just a few areas of life, He wants to be involved in all of it. Every father wants to see his children prosper and succeed. How much more does our Father in heaven?<sup>5</sup> This is far from a prosperity gospel or a name it, claim it philosophy. This is about priorities. Jesus promises to supply believers with all the things they need if they will make God’s kingdom their first priority (Mt 6:33).

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<sup>3</sup> Jason Topp, “4 Things the Apostle Paul Teaches Us About Money,” Christian Personal Finance – Blog: Debt & Financial Help, May 11, 2010, <http://christianpf.com/4-things-the-apostle-paul-teaches-us-about-money/>, (accessed December 17, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> IVP New Testament Commentaries, “Proper Regard for Faithful Elders,” Bible Gateway, <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/1Tim/Proper-Regard-Faithful-Elders>, (accessed Sept 3, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Bob Lotich, “What the Bible Really Says about Prosperity?” Christian Personal Finance – Blog: Debt & Financial Help, May 11, 2008, <http://christianpf.com/what-the-bible-really-says-about-prosperity/>, (accessed December 17, 2011).



This project hopes to encourage the tentmaking missionary to improve as a businessperson. Everything that the Father's businessperson does should be done with excellence. True excellence means you dedicate yourself fully to everything you do, as you do when working for the Lord (Col 3:23).<sup>6</sup> Part of excellence is to treat the customer well and live a life of integrity. Integrity is about Christ-centered living, when believers are who they say they are. Christ should be the model for Christian business, because He was known to be a man of integrity, even among His enemies (Mt 22:16). One of the first things that the tentmaking missionary must think about is the possibility of making a profit in the tentmaking business and how he or she will handle this income. Missionaries must settle the issue in their heart about the extra money that may come their way, especially large sums of money. They must be ready to answer questions of how will it be used and how will it affect life and attitudes in general. Another area that missionaries will have to face is how a missionary making money will be viewed by supporting churches. In this case, the question should be rephrased and asked this way: "If the missionary's tentmaking business makes a lot of money, how will it be viewed by the supporting pastor and church leaders?" They are usually the ones that lead the church to support a certain missionary or not.

Paul was certainly entitled to ask the churches he started to support his ministry, but never used that advantage. However, he did receive support from some churches. This paper encourages the tentmaking missionary to have the support of as many churches as possible for at least the first four to six years. Ideally, the support should start even before they leave for the foreign country, while they are raising all their support. This support should continue throughout

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<sup>6</sup> Mike Eaton, "5 Biblical Characteristics of Excellence | Christian Business Greater Seas," God in Business | Christian Business Greater Seas, 2011, <http://greaterseas.com/2011/05/biblical-excellence/>. (accessed December 25, 2011).

language school, and a couple of years after, while the tentmaking business is starting. An agreement could be made that if the business does well enough to supplement their income, the churches' support could be reduced to allow the church to help other missionaries.

This is a world of who you know and it is largely based on relationships. The importance of relationships varies from country to country, but this holds true to some degree in all cultures. This is no different from the church. Most of the churches support missionaries because they have a relationship in some way. They may not know them personally, but there is a connection there somewhere. Churches want to know how their mission dollars are being used. When a church supports a missionary financially, they will usually support that missionary with their prayers also. If they no longer support that missionary financially, they will usually stop praying for them. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Mt 6:31).

This project advises the potential tentmaking missionary to proceed with care, but with boldness, as tentmaking is very untraditional in western culture. Many pastors may lead their churches to conclude that if the missionary is making money then, they do not need their churches' support. If this is the conclusion, the prayer support will also cease. Some pastors and church leaders will never know what the missionary goes through. Some missionaries will never know what the pastor goes through, so it seems that the best and wise thing to do would be for the missionary to try to understand and to be understood.

There is no evidence of the church that sent Paul interfering in or hindering his ministry. Paul was an extension of the Antioch churches' outreach and yet he must have submitted to the leadership of the church as he taught. Though the Holy Spirit is the Commander in Chief of missions, the importance and the place of the local church must never be minimized. Apart from

the Holy Spirit, no other person or organization ought to have as much influence over the direction and decisions of the missionary as his local sending church.<sup>7</sup>

Every missionary should be an *interdependent* missionary. Not an *independent* missionary nor a *dependent* one. The importance of partnerships is discussed in the next chapter. However, interdependence means that the missionary is an extension of the churches' ministry and thereby is dependent on their faithful prayers and giving. This also means that the church is dependent on the missionary taking the gospel "into all the world" as an extension of their ministry. The missionaries could not go and do what they do without the church and the church could not fulfill the Great Commission without sending out missionaries with prayer and financial support. Both the missionary and the church are dependent on one another.

Some mission organizations have given the term "deputation" to describe what a missionary does when he or she is raising support. Deputize means to stand in for, sit in for, fill in for, take the place of, or act on behalf of. When the missionary is sent out, he or she is representing Christ and acting on behalf of their supporters. When the missionary starts a new church, the new believers, who are meeting together, are a mission of their sending church until they are actually ready to organize into an independent church. Mission means "The act of sending, or the state of being sent; delegated by authority, with certain powers for transacting business."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> BIMI, "The Importance of the Sending Church," Baptist International Missions, Inc., December 18, 2011, <http://www.bimi.org/content/enChurch.php>, (accessed December 18, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Mission," Dictionary and Thesaurus – Merriam-Webster Online, 2011, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mission?show=1>, (accessed December 26, 2011).

It is a false notion for a church to claim they are fulfilling the Great Commission if all they are doing is praying for missionaries and not supporting them financially. Prayer plays a vital part in the life of every believer and their perspective ministries, but without actions, it falls short in the realities of the Christian life. Paul needed the prayers of others and often requested that others pray for him, but if prayer was all that he needed then he would not have had to work a job making tents. He would not have talked so much about money. He would not even have had to leave his church in Antioch and would have just prayed that the world receives Jesus as Lord and Savior.

If by chance, the tentmaking business becomes extremely and noticeably profitable, it would be best for the missionary to decide beforehand how he or she will use the money. This project suggests that the missionary pre-determine that they are going to be very generous with the money. This money could be used to help bring over new tentmaking missionaries, which would, in turn, help to expand the tentmaking business. This money could be used to start or fund new projects that the missionary believes will be effective. Paul used his tentmaking money to support himself, his team and his projects. They all needed to eat, travel, clothe themselves, and rent a place to live. Paul used his tentmaking money to fund his ministry projects. He rented the hall of Tyrannus for two years and taught the Bible to his students every day. There are dangers associated with money that will be discussed later, but generosity seems to combat any greed that may arise.

Most missionaries are not sent out with too much financial support. Every missionary could always use and do more with more support. This paper suggests that the potential tentmaking missionaries leave for the foreign country only after they have either raised enough

support to live comfortably (not extravagantly) in that particular country or they are planning to become a “job taker” type of tentmaker by work for a tentmaking business that provides an adequate salary package.

Most churches will realize that it takes a visa to live in another country and obtaining a visa takes some creativity for missionaries in this present day and age. Many church leaders and members have traveled internationally and are gaining a greater understanding of global missions. Churches are understanding more and more of the obstacles and requirements that missionaries are facing. Many churches are not in a financial position to afford to give every missionary special project funds, and in depressed economies the tentmaking missions strategy looks more appealing as a Biblical missions model.

If a supporting church has a problem with the missionary earning an income, then he or she must do some soul searching and be prepared to make some difficult decisions. Some of these kinds of churches might not be comfortable supporting the ministry of the Apostle Paul himself. Even though he is one of the greatest examples of a missionary in the Bible, he does not fit the missionary mold that many churches are looking for. He was a single missionary, worked a dirty job to earn money, and was also an ex-convict, who was eventually killed in prison. However, if the missionary’s home church has a problem with his or her ministry he should submit to them and work things out.

The world revolves around the market place and money is the primary motivation behind most activities.<sup>9</sup> Not only are missionaries going to have to learn to speak the language of their perspective countries, they would be wise to learn to speak the global language — money! It

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<sup>9</sup> Lai, “Tent-making: Business as Missions,” 4.

costs money to take the Good News to others. It is free for the receiver but costs the missionary valuable time and lots of money. It is said that money talks, but it is sad to hear it often say, “good bye” to most missionaries. The Bible says that money solves many problems. “A party gives laughter, wine gives happiness, and money gives everything” (Eccl 10:19). Money is a big part of life and a big part of world missions. The tentmaker must take special care to view the business as a part of the whole strategy and not just extra income. The focus must be on God and those who need Him.

Jesus questioned Peter three times with the same question wanting to know his priorities. Perhaps, He wanted to know if Peter’s priority was his fishing job or serving Him by fishing for men, or if he loved Jesus more than anyone else or anything else.<sup>10</sup> Some people want to hang on to a good salary and dabble in ministry. However, many have stepped out in faith to follow God’s leading and have made Him their whole life’s priority.

Paul associated work with love (2 Thes 3:12). When a person works because they want to serve and help others gain benefit, they will be fulfilled. If a person works for prestige or a paycheck, they will either get burned out or they will become bored. Jesus was a carpenter and used a hammer. Paul was a tentmaker using his hands to work. Paul said there is benefit in enjoying the job. God dug in the dirt to form man and made him a living soul (Gn 2:7). Work was given to man before the fall. It is not a punishment. God gave each person a job to do (Gn 2:13). God Almighty got his hands dirty when He dug in the dirt to make man.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Marion Adams, “John tells the Good News about Jesus,” Wycliffe Associates, 2006, <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/john-ma-lbw.htm>, (accessed August 18, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Tim Keller, “Work,” Redeemer Church, New York City, Audio Sermon. 1998.

## Ethics

There are very few missionaries who would ever consider taking a bribe or are even in a position to be offered a bribe. However, most missionaries will have to face the possibility of being asked to give a bribe. The tentmaking missionary will certainly have to face this issue because of the direct contact with business and government. Proverbs talks about bribes and there are several examples of bribes in the Bible. The word “bribe” and its meaning is usually viewed by people in most societies in a negative way. This is why it is done in secret “under the table.” Proverbs say, “The wicked take secret bribes to pervert the course of justice” (Prv 17:23). “A just king gives stability to his nation, but one who demands bribes destroys it” (Prv 29:4). “Greed brings grief to the whole family, but those who hate bribes will live” (Prv 15:27). “Showing partiality is never good, yet some will do wrong for a mere piece of bread” (Prv 28:21).

The Philistine leaders offered Delilah a bribe to find out where Samson got his strength (Jgs 16:5). The Jewish leaders offered Judas a bribe to deliver Jesus to them to be crucified (Mt 26:15). The Jewish leaders also bribed the Roman guards to say that the disciples stole the body of Jesus (Mt 28:12). Felix was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe for his release, but Paul never did (Acts 24:26). Christ was once offered a bribe, all the kingdoms of the world, if he would but honor Satan, and he rejected the temptation with a sharp rebuke from God’s word.<sup>12</sup> In each case, there was either deception, perversion of justice, greed, or cover-ups that were involved in the bribes.

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<sup>12</sup> Dan Graves, “Bribes « Solomon and Christ,” Welcome to DSGraves, September 2011, <http://www.dsgraves.com/solomonandchrist/category/bribes/>, (accessed December 11, 2011).

The Bible also says, “A bribe is like a lucky charm; whoever gives one will prosper” (Prv 17:8). “A secret gift calms anger; a bribe under the table pacifies fury” (Prv 21:14). “Giving a gift can open doors; it gives access to important people” (Prv 18:16). The conflict arises in trying to discern if the action falls under the category of a bribe or a gift. Christians certainly ought to be generous. Most bribes are given in secret, but gifts are often given in secret as well. It is not always made public when a gift is given. Gifts are not always given to others just because of a relationship (Prv 18:16). Jacob gave Esau a gift to pacify his anger. Abigail gave David a gift to pacify his anger. This will be hard to understand fully until time is spent in a country where bribes and gifts are a way of life. Giving gifts can be strategic and wise. It is not good to buy friends, but it is great to be friendly and have many friends.

This is one perspective of a veteran missionary. A new missionary, who recently arrived in the Ukraine, shared a story with this veteran missionary. After he rented an auditorium, the director of the building began dropping hints that the agreement might have to be canceled. They both knew that a gift to the director would solve the problem. The new missionary felt he could not do that. He could not compromise his biblical integrity. He thought it would be more “Christian” to spend his valuable time finding another facility than offering a gift to the director. As they parted, the veteran asked him to look up the verses he felt he was being asked to compromise. He agreed. The veteran had been in his spot several years before and wanted to see if the new missionary would come to the same conclusion.

He did a word study and found that in the Old Testament the Hebrew word *shochad* usually is translated as “bribe,” but sometimes as “gift” or “ransom” (Prv 6:25) or “present” (2 Kgs 16:8). *Minhah* normally is translated as “gift,” but sometimes as “bribe.” He found that both



*shochad* and *minhah* are used to show the submission of an inferior to a superior. The idea of bribe or gift in this sense does not appear in the New Testament. In his examination of Old Testament passages, which mention gift, present, or bribe, two principles emerged. First, the Bible always condemns taking a bribe. Those in authority who are deciding people's futures are to be the embodiment of impartial justice. Second, the Bible never condemns giving a gift or a bribe. In fact, the opposite is true. Proverbs clearly states that when meeting with a great person, a gift should be given (Prv 18:16). It also states that if an angry official needs to be pacified, it might be best to try a gift given in private (Prv 21:14). He feels that this is a difficult concept for Westerners to understand. Those blessed enough to live in a law-based society rarely face the problem. Unfortunately, most people around the world do not have this advantage. In many settings worldwide, gifts or bribes are not simply a way around the law. They also can be a culturally based incentive for officials to do their prescribed jobs. Many would call it a tip. For example, it would not be biblical to bribe an official in order to evade a building code or visa requirement. But if this official is delaying action, or is misinterpreting the law, it would not be unbiblical to offer a gift. It may violate Western cultural assumptions and personal convictions, but it does not contradict Scripture.

The Bible is for all cultures, for all times, and for all social classes. Scripture is clear that God's people, who are in positions of power and leadership, must uphold blind, impartial justice. But all of God's people do not have godly rulers. Many times His people suffer under unjust decision makers, blaspheming tyrants, or lazy clerks. In such situations, God's compassion and wisdom are found in His not forbidding offering a bribe. He knows His children may find themselves in positions of powerlessness where the future depends on the personal favor of the

decision maker, regardless of the written law. In many countries there are police manufacturing traffic violations or refusing to respond to calls for help, claiming a lack of personnel or gasoline.

Many cultures are held together by relationships, not laws. The average businessperson avoids troubles with officials through strategic friendships, which he has worked hard to cultivate and which he maintains through gifts. In an environment without a working financial or legal system, these relationships provide a form of insurance. Second, lawlessness in a society usually stems from a very poor economy. Often government officials are months behind in their salary, they have no motivation to work, and bribes may be their major source of income. Most government officials secured their position because of past connections and have inherited the expectation that bribery is a matter of course.<sup>13</sup>

Another missionary has the opposite view of bribes and gifts. He was denied a long-term visa from an Asian country because he would not pay bribes. He gives five excuses other missionaries have for giving bribes and counters these excuses with a reason not to give a bribe. The missionary's first excuse for giving a bribe is that if bribes are the norm in the country where they serve they should not try to impose their own culture on the local people. He says the strongest argument against accepting bribery as a cultural norm is that virtually every nation of the world has laws prohibiting it. The second excuse is to say that the mission is the higher good, making bribery acceptable. He says this argument places pragmatism over obedience. The missionary's third excuse is to call the bribe a gift. His counter argument is that a bribe has to be given in secret but a gift does not. The fourth excuse is to say that a bribe does not hurt anyone.

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<sup>13</sup> Gregory Nichols, "Bribery and Ministry: Three Views," East-West Church & Ministry Report, 1997, <http://www.eastwestreport.org/articles/ew05101.htm>, (accessed December 11, 2011).

His argument for this excuse points to several areas that are hurt because of bribes. He believes a country where bribery is a daily occurrence is hindered from developing economically, politically, and socially. He believes it also causes oppression and delays. The fifth excuse is that the Bible is unclear on bribery. He says the verse does not condemn or condone; it merely observes the effectiveness of the practice. He concluded that it is best never to use bribes as a means of accomplishing God's will.<sup>14</sup>

Another Missionary shares this story. Their return flight from Jakarta, capital city of Indonesia, had been properly booked, paid for and confirmed, but when they checked in, they were told that all seats had already been taken. Their protests were in vain, so they spent an uncomfortable week in the Indonesian rainy season. Fortunately, they were able to live with Christian friends. Every day, the same experience — all seats were full. Finally, the brother-in-law, who lived in the country, explained the problem: when checking-in, the counter has two layers. You lay the ticket on the top and the gift underneath. They got their seats immediately. The officials at the desk earn only a small salary. The government assumes that they will naturally improve their salary with bribery.

This missionary believes when a Christian is confronted by corruptible officials and has no opportunity to eliminate the corruption at the moment, he can feel free to obtain his rights with gifts. Only when he purchases unfair advantages, does he make himself guilty. However, even the Christian who is forced to pay will fight against corruption and begin by revealing and by exterminating all forms of bribery and corruption in the society. Bribery is thus permissible to a

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<sup>14</sup> Steven Falkiner, "Bribery, Where are the lines?" Center for the Study of Health in Mission 1997, <http://csthmbestpractices.org/ConsensusDocuments/Bribery1.2.pdf>, (accessed December 26, 2011).

certain extent, as long as it is not used to obstruct justice, but only to realize legal possibilities, or to protect an individual from danger. Even then, the option should only be used with restraint and only in countries and cultures that provide no other possibility (complaint to one's superior, a lawsuit or an alternative method). It might be permissible, for example, to bribe a doctor employed by the state to perform a legal operation essential to a person's survival, but in this case, the doctor makes himself guilty of working for a bribe.<sup>15</sup>

Missionaries may face some of these challenging decisions. Few missionaries want to give a bribe or a gift to a bully. However, when matters are not clear and the Bible is not specific, it may be a matter of conscience. Depending on how the missionary has been raised, giving a gift or a bribe may be wrong for some and okay for others. The missionary should know if, after giving the gift, he or she can still share the Good News of Jesus Christ with that person. In addition, the missionary must ask why they are giving the bribe. Is it because they are impatient? Is it because they are not waiting on God to do His work? Once a bribe or gift is given, it will probably be expected from then on and it may even have to be increased each time. One wealthy Chinese businessperson said that he gives 30 percent of his yearly profit as gifts to maintain key relationships.

God promises to give wisdom in each decision. There are pros and cons that must be weighed. Often, the people who would never give a bribe or gift don't seem to mind if they benefit from one of their local friends giving a bribe or gift for them on their behalf.

There may be some situations within other cultures that will go against everything a

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas Schirmacher, "Bribery and Corruption," *Christianity and Society* 8, 1998, <http://www.contra-mundum.org/>, (accessed December 26, 2011).

missionary has been taught. The Pharisees made their own Sabbath rules and claimed they were from Moses, who received them directly from God. Jesus always seemed to wait until it was Sunday to heal someone. While every situation is similar, they are also different in so many ways. Each person will one day stand before God and answer for what he or she has done.

### Morality

Living overseas often exaggerates problems or causes problems to surface that were manageable in the missionary's home country. Many get to where they are going but leave within the first two months because they didn't realize their own shortcomings and weren't aware of the kinds of obstacles and pitfalls that were waiting for them.<sup>16</sup>

It seems that it is easier for a missionary to let his guard down in a foreign country when it seems no one knows him and no one is watching. The passage in First Timothy should serve as a warning to the tentmaking missionary and to the believer sent overseas by their company. Both may have to handle an increase in wealth. The newfound wealth can often lead to a love of money, greed and pride. This person often falls into temptation that leads to ruin and destruction. Paul did not want to become a castaway so he beat his body into subjection (1 Cor 9:27). Two common temptations in life usually involve money and immorality.<sup>17</sup> Those who give in to these temptations no longer hold the positions they once had and they lose their influence and

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<sup>16</sup> Celeste Heiter, "What It Takes to Live and Work Abroad," *Transitions Abroad*, June 2004, [http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/0401/what\\_it\\_takes\\_to\\_life\\_and\\_work\\_abroad.shtml](http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/0401/what_it_takes_to_life_and_work_abroad.shtml), (accessed September 3, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Bobby Ross, Jr. "Sex, Money ... Pride? Why Pastors Are Stepping Down," *Christianity Today*, July 2011, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/julyweb-only/sexmoneypride.html>, (accessed September 19, 2011).

effectiveness for Christ.

There are hundreds of examples of missionaries who have been used by the Lord in a great way. They have been faithful to the Lord, faithful in marriage, in money and in ministry, and are still being used. When money is involved, special care must be taken and caution is advised.

Steps should be taken to insure that the missionary will not fall into this temptation. He must start by acknowledging his weakness. Pride comes before a fall (Prv 16:18). The one who says he can handle the temptation is claiming to be stronger than Samson, wiser than Solomon, and more godly than David.<sup>18</sup> Each of these men were used by God in a great way but also had problems with immorality.

He must rely on the Holy Spirit and allow God's Word to dwell in him richly (Col 3:16). He must surround himself with godly men and wise counselors. He must have someone or several, who are close enough to hold him accountable and spend less time alone. Paul traveled with a team and the few times he was alone he requested that his friends join him (Acts 17:15).

Paul talked a lot about marriage and about sexual sins. Missionaries have to work on their own marriages and keep them strong. If at all possible, the missionary's wife should work together with her husband in the tentmaking. Single missionaries should try to find someone they can work alongside. The tentmaking business should be accomplished through teamwork anyway. Too much time alone with the opposite sex, who is not a spouse, can be very dangerous (1 Cor 7:2). Missionaries must consider the consequences of adultery (Prv 6:28). God sees everything and nothing is hidden from Him (Heb 4:13).

Missionaries have to take breaks and go back to their home country. There is always a

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<sup>18</sup> Voddie Baucham, "Marriage By Design," DVD, North Point Ministries, 2006.

certain amount of cultural pressure that never goes away for missionaries. The Missionary will always be a foreigner. As a foreigner, the missionary will always have others watching him. Every missionary should regularly return to his home country. Getting away always gives a new perspective and often helps to recharge the missionary. Paul made three missionary journeys and returned to his home three times. These are practical suggestions to protect missionaries and help keep them on the field longer.

## CHAPTER 4

### PARTNERSHIPS IN THE TENTMAKING BUSINESS

#### Leadership

There has been so much good material written about leadership already, but it is hard to look at Paul's life without noticing his leadership ability and methods. This chapter will also include the partnerships and teamwork aspects of the tentmaking missions strategy.

Every team needs a leader. Paul asked believers to imitate and follow him, just as he imitated and followed Christ (1 Cor 11:1). He made mistakes, but he wanted believers to follow his godly example as he followed Christ. Paul may have started out in his ministry as a task oriented person but later changed to become more people oriented. His temperament is identified as the most powerful (and destructive) of the temperaments. It is not unreasonable to state that the world's greatest feared dictators and diabolical criminals were perhaps Choleric. However, when this person truly comes to know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, and uses their strengths for the glory of God they make some of the greatest leaders in Christianity. The Apostle Paul was probably a Choleric. Prior to his conversion on the Damascus Road Paul used his temperament strengths to advance the cause of Judaism, self-interest and terrorizing Christians. Choleric are extremely tough-willed. They want to have total control over themselves and anyone around them. They have a severe problem with anger. Choleric have a tendency to seldom express other emotions such as love, tenderness, warmth and compassion. Choleric believe that no one else can carry out a task as well as them. They have a tendency to overwork themselves, and are prone to burnout. After Paul's salvation he soon became the Apostle to the Gentiles. When the Choleric is brought under the authority of Jesus Christ,



greatness can be accomplished for the Kingdom of God. The individual is transformed in the sense of their temperament strengths being used for a different purpose as they feast on the Word of God and grow as a new creation in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Since every person is shaped differently, the person who desires to attempt a tentmaking ministry will need to know how he or she has been wired by God. They must know which personalities they can work with and which ones are potential conflicts. They must also be able to see different potential business opportunities. God gives people spiritual gifts, passions, abilities, personalities, and experiences, unique only to themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Paul led by example, trained others to do what he did, watched them do it and got himself out of the way to let them accomplish the task as God led them (2 Tm 2:2). He does not appear to have been a micro manager. Paul was not the bottleneck to progress. He delegated responsibility and did only what only he could or had to do. Moses was a bottleneck to progress when his father-in-law advised him to change his business or ministry strategy. Moses was wearing himself out and the people, as well as frustrating everyone. Moses then learned to delegate responsibility (Ex 18:15).

To consider Paul's leadership great, three things must be true. First, his accomplishments as a leader were great. Certainly there are many factors that led to the growth of Christianity, but Paul's leadership set the foundation upon which Christianity would grow. Churches have spread

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<sup>1</sup> Paul E. McLaughlin, "Personality Type: Choleric," God's Way Services, <http://www.godswayservices.com/The-Choleric.htm>, (accessed December 30, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Rick Warren, "You Were Shaped For Serving God," Saddleback Church, 2011, <http://saddleback.com/aboutsaddleback/livingonpurpose/shapedforservinggod/>, (accessed August 31, 2011).

throughout the world because of Paul's ministry. Second, he achieved what he did by using resources wisely. In terms of the resources he commanded, Paul had next to nothing. He accomplished so much with so little, which demonstrates his leadership strength. Paul puts to shame the many leaders who command vast resources and are at best capable of achieving incremental improvements. Third, he protected the values of those he led. He was whipped, stoned and imprisoned, but remained committed to Christian values. He spread the word of Christianity with great success and he did so without compromising its values. Failure or mediocre performance in even one of these components will never equate to great leadership.<sup>3</sup>

One key to Paul's leadership was empowerment. While Paul challenged people to change, he also empowered them to make the required change. Paul was a transformational leader who paid attention to those who are led to such an extent that the leader understands the development needs of each.<sup>4</sup> That is one area where Paul excelled. The apostle was a leader who influenced those around him. He led not from his position as apostle, but from who he was as God's bondservant.<sup>5</sup> Paul empowered young Timothy when he asked the Corinthians to treat Timothy

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<sup>3</sup> John Roulet, "The Apostle Paul: A Truly Great Modern Leader," *The Voice | News, Christian Life and Culture*, <http://www.thevoicemagazine.com/leadership-/leadership/the-apostle-paul-a-truly-great-modern-leader.html>, (accessed January 03, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Bernard Bass, "From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision," *Organizational dynamics*, (1990), Vol. 18, 3: 30.

<sup>5</sup> Michael T. Cooper, "The Transformational Leadership of the Apostle Paul: A Contextual and Biblical Leadership for Contemporary Business and Ministry," (The Timothy Center for Sustainable Transformation), PDF, pg. 6, <http://www.thetimothycenter.org/ttc/component/content/article/106-search-results?cx=partner-pub-8876640874886106%3A5495413634&cof=FORID%3A10&ie=UTF-8&q=Michael+T.+Cooper%2C+%E2%80%9CThe+Transformational+Leadership+of+the+Apostle+Paul&sa=Search&siteurl=www.thetimothycenter.org%252Fttc%252F&ref=www.thetimothycenter.org%2Fttc%2F>, (accessed January 4, 2012).

as his equal (1 Cor 16:17).

### Partnerships

Some say that all business partnerships are wrong for believers to enter into. But this is hard to prove according to the Bible. There is nothing more interesting, frustrating, exhausting, and exciting than partnership. Partnership is not just a nice idea or a fashionable style for tentmaking missions. The word “koinonia” means partnership, fellowship, communion, and participation.<sup>6</sup> At its root is the concept of a sharing of something with someone. All through Scripture is this principle of partnership and teamwork. Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him” (Gn 2:18). The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit. (Lk 10:1). One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Dedicate Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2). Also, the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18–20 is a reminder of this partnership.

The tentmaking missionary must have at least one partner that is local to the perspective country. When God is ready to develop a partnership He will make it clear and help the missionary choose the right person. Both individuals should be compatible financially, experientially, and socially, and be able to complement each other in the tentmaking business. If two married couples become business partners it might make or break the relationship whether or not the wives get along with each other. The partnership may look totally different than what was imagined. It is possible that both partners complement each other and are compatible in the

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<sup>6</sup>Strong’s Greek Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. “koinonia,” n.p.

necessary areas and yet the local partner is an unbeliever. This can be safe arrangement if the missionary has the majority of the decision-making power. Also, the local unbelieving partner will most likely become a believer throughout the course of time.

Do not be unequally yoked (2 Cor 6:14) is often applied to marriage and to business partners. Paul gives a farming picture of two animals yoked together to pull something in the same direction. They both have fifty percent control. If they are of different mindsets and want to go in different directions there is going to be problems.

No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money (Mt 6:24). But there is one thing I want you to know: The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. (1 Cor 11:3). Even in marriage God has given the responsibility of leading to the man.

Equal partnerships are to be avoided. Neither the employees nor the whole of the business can serve two masters. Equal partnerships always come to conflict in some way or another. Anything with two heads is a monster. The tentmaking missionary should have fifty one percent or more of the decision-making power in the partnership. It could be agreed upon to equally share the profits but the final decision-making power has to be controlled by one person. This does not mean that the controlling power holder does not listen to advice. It means that the control or steering of the business needs to be in the power of a committed believer and wise businessperson.

The Bible offers several examples of partnerships. God chose Abraham to leave his country and go to another land (Gn 12:1). Abraham disobeyed when he took his nephew Lot

with him. Lot considered himself a partner of equal standing in this venture with Abraham. Sarai, Abraham's wife took on a partnership to help God out in bringing forth the promised heir (Gn 16:2). She gave Hagar her handmaid to Abraham to obtain children by her then trouble begins. The arrangement between Jacob and Laban grew bitter (Gn 31:36) and Laban's daughters turned against him (Gn 31:14–15). Jehoshaphat was one of Judas's good Kings. God's blessing was on him. Then Jehoshaphat joins in partnership with Ahab, one of Israel's most wicked kings (2 Chr 18:1).

Paul certainly does not discourage all association with those who are outside of a relationship with Christ Jesus. This is not a passage suggesting exclusion and isolation from the world; living in convents or monasteries is not what Paul means, although some have taught. Obviously, believers cannot remove themselves from association with the world. Believers are to be in the world (physically), but not of the world (spiritually). On the night of His betrayal and arrest, Jesus prayed to the Father, I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. (Jn 17:15). Paul's advice is along these same lines. Some association will be necessary if believers are to be a leavening force for change. Christians must get close to unbelievers if they are to share the positive message of God's grace. In the book "Becoming a Contagious Christian," the formula for a Christians to have the maximum impact in spreading the gospel has three parts. The first part is for the believers to have a close walk with the Lord and be strong in their faith. This makes them potent. They are salt and light. The second

part is for the believer to be in close proximity to those without Christ. The third part is for believers to give a clear presentation of the gospel.<sup>7</sup>

What Paul, and Jesus Christ, discourage is for believers to allow themselves to become involved in associations where they will be under the negative influence, power, and control of those who are opposed to God's will. Christians must never allow another unbelieving partner to have control over them. They must avoid this situation, or remove themselves from being "unequally yoked."<sup>8</sup>

Christian partnerships are not without difficulties. God has made every person different, which creates the challenge. However, God knows that believers need each other. The tentmaking missionary needs the balance, the strengths, and the help of a partner. Partnership involves trying to understand one another, praying for each other, accepting each other as equals, preferring one another, serving one another, and submitting one to the other. Faith in Jesus Christ and His Good News brings believers together. Effective partnerships are built on trust, openness, and mutual concern and develop in order to accomplish a specific vision or task. Partnerships are a process, not an event. They are even more challenging to maintain than to start. Effective partnerships expect problems and plan ahead for them.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg, "Becoming A Contagious Christian," (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> Al Maxey, "Unequally Yoked: Does 2 Corinthians 6:14 Apply to Marriage?" Free Grace Centered Magazine Focuses on Amazing Grace. Free Grace, Christianity and the Bible, 2011, [http://www.gracecentered.com/unequally\\_yoked.htm](http://www.gracecentered.com/unequally_yoked.htm), (accessed January 02, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> Douglas Leroy, "Interdependence and Partnership in Mission: An International Perspective," Church of God World Missions, 2011, [http://www.cogwm.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=315&Itemid=434](http://www.cogwm.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=315&Itemid=434), (accessed December 19, 2011).

A business partnership brings both parties into a closer relationship. When the partnership succeeds, much can be accomplished. When the partnership fails, both individuals suffer. Ministries, friendships, and businesses, may thrive or fail depending on the relationship with the partner. In a partnership, both individuals become identified with the reputation of the other partner. Each partner acquires the other's friends, but also inherits their enemies. If a Christian forms a partnership, he or she puts themselves in the position of being dealt with by God for the other partners sins.<sup>10</sup> "Choose a good reputation over great riches; being held in high esteem is better than silver or gold" (Prv 22:1).

The potential for partnerships to make or break a company's success is nothing new. By the time Abraham left Egypt, he had become very wealthy, with much livestock, silver and gold. He continued to travel through the Middle East, as God had commanded, with his nephew Lot, who also had flocks, herds and tents to his name. Initially, their cooperation made strategic sense: they were both far away from their native Ur, and otherwise alone in an unfamiliar and sometimes hostile land. Their partnership offered the safety and mutual protection of numbers. Yet as their journey progressed and their households increased, the land could no longer sustain both families so close together. Employees began to argue and tension grew. The time had come, for everyone's sake, to part ways.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> David Rowley, "Business Partnerships," Sound Doctrine, an Independent Baptist Web Site Preaching Jesus Christ and His Truth, <http://www.sounddoctrine.com/businesspart.htm>, (accessed December 29, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Vara Jackson, "God's Wisdom for Strategic Partnerships," The High Calling, February 2010, <http://www.thehighcalling.org/faith/gods-wisdom-strategic-partnerships>, (accessed January 09, 2012).

The tentmaking missionary must determine whether a partnership is productive or destructive, which should promote seeking the Lord's wisdom and guidance when contemplating such decisions. It should start by first lifting the potential partnership before the Lord in prayer, while reading God's word. Second, counsel and coaching should be sought from other godly leaders who are prayerfully connected with the missionary. Third, advantages and liabilities associated with the partnership should be considered: what is brought to the table? How can each partner be made better, and what challenges will likely be faced? Fourth, it should be considered whether the potential partner shares the other's interests and purpose: do they want the same things and share the same priorities? Fifth, they should remain open to God's direction regarding the duration of the partnership and the terms for ending it.<sup>12</sup>

The New Testament records a sharp disagreement that developed between Paul and his missionary partner, Barnabas (Acts 15:36–41). They could not reach an agreement, and so they split up. The Bible does not say whether these men ever saw one another again. It is a very moving portion of scripture to the serious Bible student. This disagreement did not involve doctrine. This was a personal dispute based upon a judgment call. To their credit, neither Paul nor Barnabas let the conflict distract them from their respective efforts at spreading the gospel. There will always be times when mature believers will disagree in matters of opinion. The important thing is to keep focused on doing the will of Christ. That is what Paul and Barnabas

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Vara Jackson.



both did. As a result, perhaps even more work was accomplished for the Lord because of the manner in which their disagreement was handled.<sup>13</sup>

Neither man was going to give in; therefore, the only remedy was for them to part ways. Perhaps there were faults on both sides, as is usual in such contentions. Paul speaks with esteem and affection both of Barnabas and Mark, in his epistles, written after this event. May all who profess the name of Jesus be thoroughly reconciled by that love, derived from God, which is not easily provoked, and which soon forgets and buries injuries.<sup>14</sup>

People problems will often occur in life and the way the people are handled will greatly affect the whole team, the business, and the ministry. When problems are brought to the leader's attention and it is a problem that makes the leader angry, there is a temptation to try to solve the matter immediately. There is usually a strong desire to go to that person and put them in their place. However, "People with understanding control their anger; a hot temper shows great foolishness" (Prv 14:29). "Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs" (Prv 19:11). The best leaders must gather as much information about the matter as possible. They would do well to wait as long as they can to confront the person. It might be best if the leader waits a day or two if possible to calm down. "Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish" (Prv 18:13). These verses offer three basic principles for making sound decisions: (1) Get the facts before answering; (2) be open to new ideas; (3) make sure you hear both sides of a story before judging. All three principles center on seeking

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<sup>13</sup> Wayne Jackson, "The Separation of Paul and Barnabas: ChristianCourier.com," ChristianCourier.com, <http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/813-the-separation-of-paul-and-barnabas>, (accessed January 09, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary (Condensed), Accordance electronic ed. (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 1996), n.p.

additional information. This is difficult work, but the only alternative is prejudice judging before getting the facts.<sup>15</sup>

### Teamwork

Teamwork is absolutely crucial for success in a tentmaking ministry overseas. The missionary has to build a good team with as many trusted locals on the team as possible, as well as family or fellow, like-minded missionaries. Otherwise, the tentmaker will probably be taken advantage of very easily. To insure that the tentmaking business has the greatest chance of success, missionaries should not try to start a business on their own. They have to surround themselves with good, trustworthy people. There is valuable insight and knowledge that locals naturally have that the tentmaking missionary cannot do without. There are government, and cultural issues that locals can easily handle. Locals also usually know the best locations for the potential business.

Paul built a good team. He could never have done what he did alone. He started with Barnabas and John Mark. He always traveled with a team on his journeys. When he and his team started a church he would often ask one of his team members to stay with the church and help oversee that ministry until they were strong enough to lead themselves (Ti 1:5). Timothy was one of Paul's right-hand men and helped in several locations, namely, the church at Ephesus. "I challenge you to think of one act of genuine significance in the history of humankind that was performed by a lone human being (apart from the redemptive work of Christ on the cross). No

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<sup>15</sup> Life Application Study Bible, Accordance electronic ed. (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004).

matter what you name, you will find that a team of people was involved.”<sup>16</sup>

Timothy, Titus, and Silas all appear in the New Testament writings as missionary companions of, and co-workers with, the Apostle Paul. Silas (aka Silvanus) accompanied Paul through Asia Minor and Greece, and was imprisoned with him at Philippi (Acts 15:22–18:5), where they were delivered by an earthquake. He is mentioned along with Timothy in the epistles of Paul (2 Cor 1:19; 1 Thes 1:1; 2 Thes 1:1). Titus is mentioned as a companion of Paul in some of his epistles (2 Cor 2:13; 7:6,13,14; 8:6,16,23; 12:18; Gal 2:1–3; 2 Tm 4:10). Timothy is mentioned in Acts 16–20, and appears in nine epistles either as joining in Paul’s greetings or as a messenger. In addition, Timothy has two New Testament letters addressed to him, and Titus one. From these three letters (called the Pastoral Epistles), it appears that Paul had commissioned Timothy to oversee the Christian community in Ephesus and vicinity, and Titus to oversee that in Crete.<sup>17</sup>

Paul reached the world through a team of believers committed to ministry. Paul was not a one-man-show. He always worked with and through a team of people who were committed to ministry. Paul set the example by working at his trade and paying the expenses of the men with him, so as not to be a burden to anyone (Acts 20:34). He asked Titus to go to the island of Crete. He was Paul’s faithful delegate, sent to Crete to work with a difficult group of people. He was a Gentile, probably in his late thirties. He passes off the pages of Scripture (2 Tm 4:10) being sent

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<sup>16</sup> John Maxwell, “Teamwork Quotes and Quotations For Building Winning Team. Quotes About Teamwork,” 2006, <http://www.inspiring-quotes-and-stories.com/teamwork-quotes.html>, (accessed January 09, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> James E. Kiefer, “Timothy, Titus, and Silas, Companions of Paul,” The Society of Archbishop Justus Computer Service, <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bio/88.html>, (accessed December 29, 2011).

to Dalmatia, modern Albania and the Balkan states. He was a solid, faithful man of God. Paul considered Artemas a worthy replacement for Titus (2 Tm. 4:10, 12). Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus to relieve Timothy, so that perhaps Timothy could join Paul in Rome before his execution (2 Tm 4:12). Paul calls Tychicus a valuable team member (Col 4:7). Zenas the lawyer and Apollos were on Paul's team. Apollos had a powerful ministry in Corinth. It is significant that Paul had such a relatively unknown, yet qualified men at his disposal.<sup>18</sup>

Building a good team can be complicated but it is essential. One person cannot do it all. One is too small a number to achieve greatness. The first place to start to build a great team is with the leader. A good leader can bring a team to success, provided values, work ethic and vision are in place. The difference between two equally talented teams is leadership. Then, the focus must be on the team and the dream should take care of itself. Leaders must make the decision to build a team, and decide who among the team are worth developing. When the right team member is in the right place, everyone benefits. The strength of the team is impacted by its weakest link. Rotten attitudes ruin a team, so for the wellbeing of the entire team they must be dismissed. Teammates must be able to count on each other when it counts. Effective teams have teammates who are constantly talking, and listening to each other. Gather the best team possible, pay the price to develop the team, do things together, delegate responsibility and authority, and give credit for success.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Steven J. Cole, "Paul's Team," Flagstaff Christian Fellowship Online, 2007, [www.fcfonline.org/content/1/sermons/060307M.pdf](http://www.fcfonline.org/content/1/sermons/060307M.pdf), (accessed December 27, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> John C. Maxwell, "The CEO Refresher - The 17 Laws of Teamwork," Refresher Publications Inc, 2001, <http://www.refresher.com/!bsteamwork.html>, (accessed December 29, 2011).

A well-known pastor shared how he is building a staff culture that is not only efficient and effective but one that could also stand as a model to the business community. He desires to build such a staff culture that businesses in the area take notice and would ask why the church staff is content and living a balanced life. When they are at church they work hard and then they go home and spend time with their families. His hiring process is well planned and rigid. When the staff member decides to leave, he hopes that they will all say that the time they spent working there was the best job they ever had.<sup>20</sup>

It is important for every business that desires to build a great team to start by inviting the right people to join. They must get the right people on the bus, get them in the right seat, then decide where they are going and how they will get there. In fact, leaders of companies that go from good to great do not start with “where” but with “who.” They start by getting the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats. They stick with this discipline, first the people, then the direction, no matter how desperate the circumstances. When it comes to getting started, good-to-great leaders understand three simple truths. First, if team building begins with “who,” they can more easily adapt to a fast-changing world. If people get on the bus because of where they think it’s going, the business will be in trouble. When they get ten miles down the road they will discover that they need to change direction because the world has changed. If people board the bus principally because of all the other great people on the bus, they will be much faster and smarter in responding to changing conditions. Second, if the right people are on the bus, there is no need to worry about motivating them. The right people are self-motivated: Nothing beats being part of a team that is expected to

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<sup>20</sup> Andy Stanley, “Staff,” North Point Community Church,” DVD Lecture, 2008.

produce great results. Third, if the wrong people on the bus, nothing else matters. The people may be headed in the right direction, but greatness still will not be achieved. Great vision with mediocre people still produces mediocre results.<sup>21</sup>

If a school is the tentmaking business then the right teachers have to be hired. Even though teaching is not a team sport, building a great team of teachers is very important. If the “job maker” does not personally know the potential “job taker” applying for the position, then he must find someone who will “tell it like it is”. There are several keys to look for when considering inviting a “job taker” type of person to join the team of a tentmaking. Besides the academic qualifications, the teacher must be willing to live overseas, adapt to new surroundings, be somewhat adventurous, learn a new language, and be willing to give up familiar people and places for a period of time. Culture shock might take place. The “job maker” has to help the “job taker” smoothly transition into this new life. The “job maker” may have to hold the hand of the “job taker” for a while through the transition or see to it that it is done.

Every leader wants to get the right people on the bus and every leader should have a good idea where the team is heading. The team that is chosen will help choose how they get there. It is a challenge to get the right people on the bus and the wrong people off. Another challenge is to get the people in the right seat. If an English school can be used as an example, the right teachers may be hired but some teachers may be able to work better with toddlers and others may work better with teenagers. It can be a disaster if that is not dealt with and the right seat is not found for the teacher.

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<sup>21</sup> Jim Collins, “Good to Great,” Jim Collins – Home, October 2001. [http://www.jimcollins.com/article\\_topics/articles/good-to-great.html](http://www.jimcollins.com/article_topics/articles/good-to-great.html), (accessed January 05, 2012).

The second quality needed in a team player is the ability to get along with others. Do they “play” well with others? Leaders can help their people excel in their positions but it is much more difficult to insure they to get along with others. A young teacher can only learn to be a great teacher by teaching. Leaders must help teachers see the need to have a good relationship with those they work with and their students. Kids who get along with their teachers not only learn more, but they are more comfortable asking questions and getting extra help.<sup>22</sup> It is hard for people to learn from someone they do not like. Good leaders can help an average teacher improve, but teams and businesses suffer because of those who are hard to get along with.

Managers are really just helping people get along with each other. Most leaders and employers would probably pay more for a person with people skills than to a person without people skills, even if that person is an expert in their field. One of the first people in American business to be paid a salary of over a million dollars a year (when there was no income tax and a person earning fifty dollars a week was considered well off) was Charles Schwab. He had been picked by Andrew Carnegie to become the first president of the newly formed United States Steel Company in 1921, when Schwab was only thirty-eight years old. (Schwab later left U.S. Steel to take over the then-troubled Bethlehem Steel Company, and he rebuilt it into one of the most profitable companies in America.)

Why did Andrew Carnegie pay a million dollars a year, or more than three thousand dollars a day, to Charles Schwab? Was Schwab was a genius? Did he know more about the manufacturing of steel than other people? Charles Schwab said he had many men working for

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<sup>22</sup> D’Arcy Lyness, “Getting Along With Teachers,” KidsHealth, 2010, [http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/school/getting\\_along\\_teachers.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/school/getting_along_teachers.html), (accessed January 10, 2012).

him who knew more about the manufacture of steel than he did.

Schwab said that he was paid this salary largely because of his ability to deal with people. “I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm among my people,” said Schwab, “the greatest asset I possess, and the way to develop the best that is in a person is by appreciation and encouragement.”<sup>23</sup>

Every team is interdependent, like a human body. There are so many parts of the human body that depend upon one another and with the loss of any of these parts, death would be certain. Even though some parts of the human body are not seen and seem insignificant or go unnoticed, they are vital to life. Since the tentmaking business will probably be comprised mostly of believers, biblical principles should be applied to building a team. Do to others as you would like them to do to you (Lk 6:31). Love covers a multitude of sins (1 Pt 4:8). Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance (1 Cor 13:4–7).

The Bible is filled with the principles of community and bearing the load of a task as a group. Moses’ father-in-law came to visit and saw that he was busy trying to hear everyone’s complaints and grievances. He gave Moses advice that helped him become a greater leader, instructing him to invite others to join his team and help him bear the leadership load. He told Moses that it was not good to try to do it all himself. “You’re going to wear yourself out — and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself” (Ex 18:18).

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<sup>23</sup> Dale Carnegie, *How To Win Friends And Influence People*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1946), 35.



Paul was used by God to write the letter to the church at Philippi and the second chapter can be directly applied to leaders and teams. In this chapter, Paul gives a supreme portrait of Christ, Who is the great example to all tentmaking leaders and team members. In the first four verses, Paul first establishes that the team members are all believers by asking four questions. The tentmaking foreign team members will all be believers, which will also increase the missionary force as more team members are added.

In verses two through four, Paul makes an appeal for unity upon all of the sacred elements of true Christianity. Petty strivings for place and preferment, jockeying for advantage, pushing and shoving for prestige or attention destroys teams. These vices have been spoilers of teams and the church of God in all ages.<sup>24</sup> Paul wanted their joy to be made full and complete by any unity that was lacking in them. They were to love the same things and have the same love for one another and for the Lord.<sup>25</sup> Paul was pulling the team together.

He presents Jesus as the ultimate example of servant leadership. Most scholars believe that verses six to eleven are from a hymn sung by the early Christian church. Paul was using this hymn to show Jesus as a model of servant hood. The passage holds many parallels to the prophecy of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53.<sup>26</sup> Christ emptied himself by taking the form of a slave, but he stooped even lower when his human condition and his obedience led him to the

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<sup>24</sup> James B. Coffman, "Philippians - Coffman's Commentary of the New Testament on SearchGodsWord.org," SearchGodsWord.org, Bible Study Resources from HeartLight.org, 1999, <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=php>, (accessed January 01, 2012).

<sup>25</sup> Allen Turner, "Philippians Bible Commentary," Allan Turner Contrasts Christian and Pagan Worldviews, 1999, <http://allanturner.com/phil02.html>, (accessed January 01, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Bruce Barton, et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2001), 851.

cross. In the world Paul shared with the Philippians, this was the lowest that one could stoop socially. Crucifixion was the cruelest form of official execution in the Roman empire, and although a Roman citizen might experience it if convicted of high treason, it was commonly reserved for the lower classes, especially slaves.<sup>27</sup> Paul's portrait of Christ offers tentmaking leaders a model to copy. Jesus was not at the top of the pyramid. He was at the bottom of the upside-down pyramid. Jesus humbled Himself and God exalted him to the highest place. God resists the proud leader, but gives grace to humble, servant leaders (1 Pt 5:5).

Every leader wants a team that will shine even in the leader's absence. In verses twelve to seventeen Paul reminded his team how they worked so well as a team when he was with them and how much more important it would be for them to continue in his absence. Paul was writing from prison and could not be with them. Every leader someday will be gone and replaced. He wanted his team to shine in a dark, crooked, and perverse world. He wanted them to shine in their lifestyle and in the way they conduct their business. He was nearing the time he was going to give his life as an offering to God and asked them to do the same with their service to Christ and others.

The chapter ends with Paul talking about two members on his team that shined like stars. The first star team member was Timothy and the second was a man named Epaphroditus, who is not well known. Timothy was a willing learner and a marvelous disciple of Paul. He left his home, never fell in love, never married or had a child, and he forfeited all the joys of life. He never owned a home. He didn't own a single possession. He seemed to be mobile from the

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<sup>27</sup> NIV Application Commentary, "Philippians," (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 119.

beginning to the end, at least that is what we get from the documentation of his life. The sacrificial character of Paul had such an impact on him that he literally gave his life up for the furtherance of the gospel. Nobody else had that kind of spirit. Nobody else sought only the interests of Christ. Nobody else was so consumed with the gospel extension as Timothy was. He was of great use to Paul because he was so willing to do anything Paul wanted him to do. Paul could send him somewhere, and he would go. Paul could take him with him, and he would go. Paul could leave him somewhere, and he would stay. Timothy was faithful in fulfilling that which God had given him to do. A message in the hands of Timothy would be as safe as it was in the hands of Paul because Timothy was truly his protégé.<sup>28</sup>

Paul called Epaphroditus a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. He built a strong bond with Paul. He was an incredible member of the team. He was a servant, courageous, and a godly man. He was a great soldier fighting the enemy. He was not famous, or rich or popular. He was a humble, behind-the-scenes guy who gambled with his life for the sake of somebody other than himself.<sup>29</sup> He was ill; in fact, he almost died. He risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while doing for Paul what the Philippians could not do from far away.

The leaders of the tentmaking business ministry or the “job maker” will probably have to “hold the hand” of some of the “job takers” who might go through culture shock. Culture shock

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<sup>28</sup> John MacArthur, “Model Spiritual Servants, Part 2: Timothy,” *Grace to You*, 1989, <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/50-25/model-spiritual-servants-part-2-timothy>, (accessed January 02, 2012).

<sup>29</sup> John MacArthur, “Model Spiritual Servants, Part 3: Epaphroditus,” *Grace to You*, 1989, <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/50-26/model-spiritual-servants-part-3-epaphroditus>, (accessed January 02, 2012).

is brought on by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of everyday life. When an individual enters a strange culture, all or most of these familiar signals are removed. He or she is like a fish out of water. This is followed by a feeling of frustration and anxiety. People react to the frustration in much the same way. First, they reject the environment. Another phase is regression and they begin to stay at home. Some of the symptoms of culture shock are: excessive concern over cleanliness, feelings of helplessness, irritation over delays, fear of being cheated or robbed, concerns over minor pains, and a terrible longing to be back home.

During the first few weeks most individuals are fascinated by the new. They stay in hotels and associate with nationals who speak their language and are polite and gracious to foreigners. This honeymoon stage may last from a few days or weeks to six months depending on circumstances. It is then that the second stage begins. This hostility evidently grows out of the genuine difficulty, which the visitor experiences in the process of adjustment.

Culture shock is lessened as the visitor succeeds in getting some knowledge of the language and begins to get around by himself. His sense of humor begins to exert itself. He or she is now on the way to recovery. In the final stage of adjustment the visitor accepts the customs of the country as just another way of living. In the course of time, an individual makes this adjustment. In short, the environment has not changed, but the individual's attitude towards it has. Somehow it is no longer troubling, dislikes are no longer projected onto the people of the host country and their ways. The individual gets along under a new set of living conditions.

Those suffering from culture shock often become somewhat of a problem for those who are well adjusted. These people increase their dependence on their fellow countrymen much

more than normal. Some will try to help them, others will try to avoid them. The better your fellow countryman understands culture shock, the better they will be able to help. The difficulty is that culture shock has not been studied carefully enough to give people the tools they need to help. Culture shock probably affects wives more than husbands. The husband has his professional duties to occupy him and his activities may not differ too much from what he has been accustomed to. The wife, on the other hand, has to operate in an environment that differs much more from the way she grew up.

What can be done to help a person get over culture shock as quickly as possible? The answer is to get to know the people of that host country. However, this means learning the language. Learning a new language is difficult, particularly to adults, causing frustration and anxiety. Once they are able to carry on a friendly conversation with the neighbor, or go shopping alone, confidence will be gained and a feeling of power will open up a whole new world of cultural meaning.

The leadership needs to be aware that this is taking place and be patient, sympathetic, and understanding. Although talking does not remove pain, a great deal is gained by having the source explained. With patience and understanding, it is reasonably sure that time, the great healer, will soon set things right.<sup>30</sup> Something the leadership could do to help overcome culture shock is to provide language classes so that new team members can learn important words and phrases. Another thing that might help is to prevent isolation with some kind of “buddy” system, and provide ways for them to talk to family and friends back home over the internet.

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<sup>30</sup> Lalervo Orberg, “Culture Shock & The Problem Of Adjustment To New Cultural Environments,” Worldwide Classroom: Program Listings, [http://www.worldwide.edu/travel\\_planner/culture\\_shock.html](http://www.worldwide.edu/travel_planner/culture_shock.html), (accessed January 04, 2012).

Can missionaries work together? God blesses harmony and teamwork. Psalm 133 says that unity is good and pleasant. David had many sons by many wives; probably he penned this psalm for their instruction, to engage them to love another, and, if they had done this, much of the mischief that arose in his family would have been happily prevented. The tribes of Israel had separate interests during the government of the Judges, and it often caused trouble; but now that they were united under one head, he wanted them to know how much it would be to their advantage to live in unity, especially since now the ark rested in one central place for public worship.<sup>31</sup>

When a team works to win, there must be some give and take. There must be cooperation. One person must put his or her own personal desires aside for the sake of reaching the goal, especially when two team members strongly desire to go in good but opposite directions. Two objects cannot occupy the same space. Someone or something has to move aside. When two objects fail to give way there will be a collision, and sometimes it can be fatal for one or the other or both. The best leaders who build a strong team recognize this, learn to whom they should listen and continually work on creating harmony.

God will bless the missionary who values people as He values them. It is natural for people to measure and compare themselves with others. Many people think they are either superior or inferior to others but may never voice those thoughts. It is important that missionaries value people. Jesus died for the whole world. God values every person who has ever existed. So much so, that He demonstrated this by allowing His Son, Jesus Christ to die on the cross for the sins of the world. “For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that

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<sup>31</sup>Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible (Unabridged)*, Accordance electronic ed. (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 2004).

we could be made right with God through Christ” (2 Cor 5:21). Valuing people as God does can only be done through the power of Jesus Christ.

Leadership, partnerships, and team building are all complex, but with the blessings and wisdom of the Lord, the greater part of the whole experience can be very rewarding. Great leaders are always reading, learning and growing. Paul asked the Philippian church to continue putting into practice all they learned and received from him — everything they heard from him and saw him doing. Then the God of peace will be with them (Phil 4:9).

## CHAPTER 5

### PRACTICAL PARTS OF THE TENTMAKING BUSINESS

This chapter will focus more on the practical aspects of tentmaking, which have not been previously discussed. This is to offer advice to potential tentmakers so that they might learn from the successes, insights, and even the mistakes of those who have gone this way before. The process will be discussed from beginning to the completion of the actual product and beyond.

The first practical consideration for potential tentmaking missionaries is that they must be aware of their own leadership abilities and management skills. This paper is directed to the “job maker” first, because most people in this world choose to work for someone else as an employee. Few people lead and manage others in a successful business situation. Most people would rather be led and given direction. Some people just do better when being told what to do. Not everyone can be a leader and it takes a lot of hard work to get good at it. The missionary who attempts a tentmaking business must realize they will be responsible for the wellbeing and livelihood of a number of people.

Robert Kiyosaki, author of *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, believes most people want to be employees. Why? Many like the "security" of a job. Many people do not like the responsibility that comes with owning their lives, their time, and their destiny. Many people are alien to the idea of delayed gratification. It is far easier to stay within a comfort zone and complain than to dream big and try to realize a dream. Employees have limited freedom, money and influence on their careers. On the other hand, they get a salary for the hours they work. An employee's life is more predictable and provides a sense of security. In addition, a great deal of people like their jobs. They interact and socialize there and get a sense of identity and worth from their



performances at work, etc.<sup>1</sup>

Those who fall under the category of the “job maker” may include a few different types of tentmaking missionaries. The ideal type is the missionary sent out of a church with enough funds to live, support a family, go to language school, and start a small business. This may also include the Christian businessperson, who has the God-given ability to generate wealth, who has a great business sense, a business plan, and enough money to invest in a tentmaker or a tentmaking business. The second type of person who will benefit is the “job taker,” who desires to go overseas by joining a tentmaking team.

While it is true that all believers should be leading people to Jesus, it seems that many sent by their businesses overseas, do not make good missionaries and usually the missionary does not make a very good businessperson. Believers who are sent by their businesses to other parts of the world are often greatly used to influencing others for Christ. However, their time and their schedules are usually controlled by their company or employer. They may have less concern about finances, but they have less freedom with their time. Probably less than one percent of those sent by their businesses are true tentmaking missionaries.<sup>2</sup> This paper views the missionary/businessperson (sent out by their church) as having a greater advantage than the businessperson/missionary (sent by their business).

It is most likely that tentmaking will help to supplement the missionary’s income, but there

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<sup>1</sup> Kourosh Kavian, "Robert Kiyosaki Opened My Eyes!," *The Cash Flow Quadrant Makes Perfect Sense.*, 2011, <http://www.personal-development-inside-out.com/robert-kiyosaki.html>, (accessed March 10, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Siemens, “Why Did Paul Make Tents?” 121.

are also other advantages. Tentmakers usually have more control over how they use their time. There may be a startup period when the pioneer will have to put in more hours than preferred, but after the business is up and running he is given a freedom that the Christian businessperson will not have. They can help others who might not be able to raise support and enjoy the freedom from the time obligation required to work a full-time job and the freedom from the restrictions that a lack of money can cause. They can be used to employ a team of believers, who would like to enter the country, by helping them with a visa, a salary, and a place to live. Government favor is usually enjoyed when the tentmaking business employs locals.<sup>3</sup> The tentmaking missionary is then viewed by the government as having a legitimate place in the community.

The second practical aspect of tentmaking is the benefits for the missionary sent out of a church. This will provide a foundational home base for fellowship, communication, financial and prayer support. The church in Antioch specifically laid hands on Paul and Barnabas and sent them out (Acts 13:2–3). While every member in the church at Antioch was to lead people to Christ, they only officially sent out certain members to other parts of the world for the specific task of sharing the gospel, training leaders, and planting churches. All Christians are to witness for Christ, but not all Christians are called for a full-time, specially gifted ministry of evangelism. All Christians are to be mission-minded in obedience to the Great Commission, but not all Christians can be missionaries in the proper biblical sense of the word.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Lai, “Tent-making: Business as Missions,” 39.

<sup>4</sup> Gordon Olsen, “Isn’t Every Christian a Missionary?” The Traveling Team, <http://www.thetravelingteam.org/node/159>, (accessed August 28, 2011).

The New Testament strongly suggests that Jesus started the church. He died and rose again for the church. It seems evident that He already had a church before Matthew 16, long before Acts chapter two, when Jesus began to choose His disciples. Acts chapter two seems to indicate that a change in church management took place, from Jesus to the Holy Spirit. People were added to the church at the end of Acts 2. It is hard to add to something that did not already exist.<sup>5</sup>

The Great Commission was given to the Church as a body. Therefore, His church is to send out the gospel and is God's vehicle to reach all people with His Good News. "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone" (Mk 16:15). It is the task of every believer to tell others about Jesus. It is the task of the church to send out missionaries to make disciples of all nations, baptize them, and teach them God's Word. The "Go" in the Great Commission of Matthew 28, could be better translated "having gone." It isn't a command; it's an assumption. Going is a corollary to the command of making disciples.<sup>6</sup> It assumes that all believers will be excited to go with the best news in the world to tell others about Jesus, without excuse. If Believers do not publicly proclaim Jesus Christ then the rocks along the road will cry out (Lk 19:40).<sup>7</sup> The rich man wanted to come back from the dead and warn his family about hell, but

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<sup>5</sup> Josh Davenport, "When Did The Church Start," Word Press, (2009) <http://baptistbyconviction.wordpress.com/2009/03/20/when-the-church-started/>, (accessed June 17, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> John MacArthur, "The Making Disciples of All Nations, Part 2," Grace to You, June 09, 1985, [http://www.gty.org/resources/Study+Guide+Chapter/2405\\_The-Making-Disciples-of-All-Nations-Part-2#.Tlq8UztYI7q](http://www.gty.org/resources/Study+Guide+Chapter/2405_The-Making-Disciples-of-All-Nations-Part-2#.Tlq8UztYI7q), (accessed July 5, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Blue Letter Bible. "Gospel of Luke 19 - (NLT - New Living Translation)." Blue Letter Bible. Luke Chapter 19, 1996–2011, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?b=Luk&c=19&t=NLT>, (accessed August 28, 2011).

Jesus said the preaching and teachings of God's Word by the prophets was enough (Lk 16).

It is assumed that each team member is an active member of a church and that church has recognized God doing something in the individual's life. It would be best if the home church has sent the tentmaking missionary out with their prayers and a monthly gift. As God speaks to hearts and places a destination in mind, the church should desire to send the individual out as a missionary. Other churches that the home church fellowships with, might also be able to help regularly support the tentmaking missionary during the first six years while the language is being learned and the business set up.

How long does it take missionaries to get to their perspective mission fields? Missions-sending organizations say that it is taking an average of three years for missionaries to raise their support.<sup>8</sup> Before that, it takes several years of Bible training and practical experience before they even start raising support. After Paul met Jesus on the Damascus Road he was taught God's Word for several years and he received several years of practical training and experience in the local church before he was sent out. It seems that Paul spent three years in Arabia where God personally taught him His word (Gal 1:11–18). God speaks to the hearts of individuals, but it is the church that recognizes God working in its members and sends them out to do the work of the ministry, as in the case of Paul and Barnabas.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Baptist Bible Fellowship International Missions Office. Springfield, Missouri. Information From The Director.

<sup>9</sup> IVP New Testament Commentary, "The Commissioning - Acts 13," Inter Varsity Press, <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Acts/Commissioning>, (accessed, September 6, 2011).

When raising support, the missionary should remember: some will, some won't, so what! "... you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it" (Jas 4:2). The tentmaking missionary is going to go to the country God has burned on his heart no matter how long it takes, so patience is necessary. Do not let rejection destroy the dream. Rejection is God's protection. The author advises potential tentmakers to try to raise enough support so that your family can live comfortably. A family's whole outlook and attitude will be affected based on the living conditions that can be afforded. If the missionary lives in a dump, then the family will probably think the whole country is a dump. If they can afford to live in a nice place with some of the comforts of home then the family's attitude toward the country will greatly improve.

Many western churches have changed their meeting times and this has made it more challenging for missionaries needing to raise support.<sup>10</sup> Many churches no longer have Sunday night or weeknight meetings, when the whole church gathers. The pastor is normally not going to give up his Sunday morning preaching time for a guest missionary raising support, so the missionary must rely on his network of relationships. Some missionaries are seeking support from individuals. However, the command to reach the world is not given to an individual, nor is it given to the tentmaking business. It is given to the entire church as a body.

The third practical step is to determine the best way to enter the foreign country. It has already been stated that it would be best to enter the country and begin as a language student. Language schools will give the missionary a visa. A tutor can also be hired. Depending on the

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<sup>10</sup> William J. Bryan, "Sunday Night Slump," Southern Methodist University, September 2007, <http://smu.edu/newsinfo/excerpts/william-bryan-21sept2007.asp>, (accessed September 15, 2011).

age of the children, a tutor might be the best solution if the wife and kids cannot attend language school. However, tutors themselves cannot provide a visa, so someone is going to have to go to a formal language school.

How long does it take to learn a new language? There are many factors involved, but research says that true expertise is achieved after an individual has invested 10,000 hours in learning or practicing a skill.<sup>11</sup> This means that it will probably take at least four years or longer for adults to learn to speak another language well, studying five hours a day, five days a week, for fifty weeks a year. This will require the tentmaking missionary to have enough support to sustain his family while learning the language. This is a great time to learn about the business culture of the particular country, to build relationships and look for business opportunities.

The fourth practical step is to decide on the right idea, plan, or product. The product or service should be something that will get the missionary up close and personal with the community. The potential tentmaker should begin by asking those foreigners who have been living in the country the longest a lot of questions pertaining to what they see as needs and opportunities in the community. Missionaries should begin asking these questions in their mind from day one. The business may take several years to develop.

In every society, there is a key to giving the local people the gospel. When they went to a new city to witness for Christ, Paul and Barnabas would go first to the synagogue. The Jews who were there believed in God and diligently studied the Scriptures. Tragically, however, many

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<sup>11</sup> Dr. Sarah Eaton, "How Long Does It Take To Learn A New Language?" WordPress, <http://drsaraheaton.wordpress.com/2011/02/20/how-long-does-it-take-to-learn-a-new-language/>, (accessed September 2, 2011).

could not accept Jesus as the promised Messiah because they had the wrong idea of what the Messiah should be. Paul and Barnabas tried to show clearly that the very Scriptures the Jews studied pointed to Jesus. Those in charge of the service decided who would lead the service and give the sermon. A different person was chosen to lead each week. Since it was customary for the synagogue leader to invite visiting rabbis to speak, Paul and Barnabas usually had an open door when they first went to a synagogue. However, as soon as they spoke about Jesus as Messiah, the door would often slam shut. They were usually not invited back by the religious leaders, and sometimes they would be physically thrown out of town!<sup>12</sup>

English seems to be that open door in many countries right now. It is a wave that can be “surfed” and ridden to its greatest potential. Many people in other parts of the world would like to learn English. The possibilities are endless. Other tentmaking missionaries advise offering a service as opposed to a product. Products are difficult and might be more of a headache than a help. There are demands for English schools, day cares, online help, proofreaders, leadership lessons, family and marriage seminars, and education classes of all kinds. After the tentmaker has lived in the country for a while he may meet several people worth partnering with to invest in small businesses. Some locals may wish to start a small restaurant or coffee shop. Their business could even be set up to give the tentmaker a visa. This may require the tentmaker to have ten to fifty thousand dollars at his disposal.

Many years ago God allowed the British to explore and expand their empire around the

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<sup>12</sup> Life Application Study Bible, Accordance electronic ed. (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004).

world and today a person can go almost anywhere in the world and find someone who speaks English. It was started many years ago when the English began to colonize many parts of the world. They were very organized and orderly, and were very successful in their efforts. In fact, they were so successful that English has become the language of business around the world and because God has blessed the West economically, many people in the East desire to learn to speak English. Tentmaking missionaries must always be looking for what the new wave might be. Waves do not last forever. There is a window of opportunity that has shown signs of slowly closing.

The fifth practical step is to start building the team. This step begins with finding and establishing a relationship with a good local partner. The new tentmaking business will probably start in the heart of the missionary while in language school, several years before it actually starts. Decisions must be made about the right plan, product or service, the right people must be placed in leadership, the right partnership must be found and the right members of the team must be recruited, and the right place to start the business must be researched. In addition, the price of the total investment must be weighed and calculated. When a business idea is decided on, God will bring the right people into the picture to put a partnership together.

When it is time to put the team together, it would be best if the local partner is the one who hires and manages the local staff while the tentmaking foreign missionary hires and manages the foreign missionary staff. This will help ensure that there is a more harmonious beginning. Tensions will most likely build up if the tentmaking missionary partner tries to choose the local staff that his local partner must then manage.



While the missionary is in language school, it would be very beneficial if goals were written down. There is a certain magic in writing down goals. God made each person to move in the direction that is planted in the brain and writing down an idea is like planting a seed. James said that each person must humbly accept the word God has planted in their hearts, for it has the power to save their souls (James 1:21). Maybe this is why Jesus is referred to as the “Word” (Jn 1:1). Paul wrote to Timothy about the power of God’s word and how he was taught the Scriptures from a young age. He used the word “Scriptures” which means writing, something written down, or grammar.<sup>13</sup> People who write down their goals are more likely to achieve them.

According to Dave Kohl, professor emeritus at Virginia Tech: People who regularly write down their goals earn nine times as much over their lifetimes as people who don’t. 80 percent of Americans say they don’t have goals. 16 percent do have goals but don’t write them down. Less than 4 percent write down their goals and fewer than 1 percent review them on an ongoing basis.<sup>14</sup> Write down your goals and review them.

The sixth practical step is to choose a location and registration type for the business. Once a solid business plan has been settled on, and a partnership and team has been put together, all the money will need to be available. The actual opening day may be a year away. The next two things that may often take place at the same time is finding the best location for the store,

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<sup>13</sup> Blue Letter Bible, “Dictionary and Word Search for grammar (Strong’s 1121),” Blue Letter Bible. 1996–2012, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G1121&t=NLT>, (accessed January 15, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> David Fealkoff, “5 Statistics about Writing Down Goals,” Goals Gone Social, August 5, 2011, [http://www.goalsgonesocial.com/ggs2/blogs/write\\_down\\_goals](http://www.goalsgonesocial.com/ggs2/blogs/write_down_goals), (accessed January 16, 2012).

business or office and registration of the company. Sometimes businesses cannot rent a place without first registering the company and sometimes the business cannot register a company without a business address. The building will probably need to be renovated, while equipment, furniture, and supplies are purchased. There needs to be a way to advertise the company to get the businesses' name out into the community.

MacDonald's spends a lot of time doing their homework before they put in a new store. They find the high traffic areas. Most people don't realize it, but McDonald's is not a burger-flipping restaurant chain; it is one of the world's best real estate portfolios. Franchisees flip the burgers. McDonald's simply owns the best commercial property all over the world. They make money on real estate. McDonald's will buy properties that it feels are, or will be, hot locations.<sup>15</sup> If the tentmaking business can locate near McDonald's they can be assured of a good location. There is a less painful and easier way to start a successful business if lessons can be learned from those who have been successful, such as McDonalds. It will take both a pioneer or entrepreneur's spirit to be willing to take the calculated risks and a little bit of patience for plans to develop. It will take a student who is willing to be humble, ask questions, learn from others, and allow someone to speak into his or her life, rather than rush into a problem situation that could have been avoided. "The wise are cautious and avoid danger; fools plunge ahead with reckless confidence" (Pr 14:16). It may not be what the potential tentmaker wants to hear, but it could

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<sup>15</sup> Anthony Dadiani, "McDonalds Is a Real Estate Company - Seeking Alpha," Stock Market News & Financial Analysis - Seeking Alpha, April 23, 2008, <http://seekingalpha.com/article/73533-mcdonalds-is-a-real-estate-company>, (accessed January 16, 2012).

save him or her from a lot of heartache and trouble. Many want to rush in and start something, thinking that if they do not start something they are wasting precious time. It would be to the tentmaker's advantage to learn as much as possible before he or she actually opens his or her new business. God will make things happen without their involvement, but God also gave the missionary a brain, common sense, and human responsibility.

The local partner will know more about registering the company or know where to go and who to ask. Embassies or consulates might also be able to advise when registering the company. There are several different kinds of companies that can be registered and they all have different costs. Every country will be different. One of the easiest and most affordable type of company to register is for the tentmaking missionary and the local partner to register the new business as a local company. This is where the trust factor becomes important because this type of company will have to be registered totally in the local partner's name. This type of company may require anywhere from twenty thousand US dollars to two hundred thousand dollars to be put into a bank account for the registration period. For instance, registering a consulting business required a twenty thousand deposit in the bank in 2006 and registering a school required about two hundred thousand US dollars in 2011. This money can be taken out of the bank after the company is registered and then used in the company operations. This is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to start a company and then if it is profitable enough the company can later be changed to a joint venture or an international company. A joint venture or international company is much more complicated and requires a larger deposit in the bank for registration. This may involve lawyers, attorneys, and a company that is strong and successful back in the home country. Taxes

are also different for different types of businesses. Consulting companies were taxed at a higher rate than education companies.

Another type of business structure that can be set up and offer the missionary a visa is a representative office (R.O.). This type of a company registration can be created to represent the mother company. It may be less expensive to start and will provide a visa to live within a certain country. However, this type of company may have a few restrictions such as preventing the representative office from making money in the host country.

The seventh practical step is to lead and manage the business. The tentmaker must manage and grow the business after it is started or see to it that there is someone capable of doing the job. Many people can start something but they cannot manage what they started or grow it into a successful business. Paul saw to it that the churches that were started were in the care of capable local leadership or one of his own team members and then he moved on. His tentmaking business was portable and he had good partners.

Christians offer the best product in the world. It is the greatest news in the world. Since every Christian represents Jesus Christ, everything that is done must be done with excellence. Many businesses make promises but fail to deliver. Many local businesses might rather cheat a customer out of ten dollars in one day than to develop a long-term relationship and make one hundred dollars in a week.

A tentmaking business cannot afford to make promises that cannot be delivered. Integrity and excellence will be like a shining light in a dark world. No business likes to give refunds but it is so important for a tentmaking business to give a guarantee for the product. Money back

guarantees for a product help to provide a great reputation.

The biggest hurdle to overcome is trust. Customers do not know if they can trust a business. Money back guarantees increase trust. High-priced products present even more of a challenge. By offering a money back guarantee, the tentmaker is standing behind the product and setting the customers' minds at ease. This might make the business even more competitive in the market. One dissatisfied customer can produce loads of bad publicity. If a full refund is not offered, chances are that a customer who is unhappy will become truly irate. It is very easy for a dissatisfied customer to post a complaint online for millions to see. It's far too detrimental to let dissatisfied customers go about their way. Do what it takes to please them; refund their money and offer them an incentive to do business with the company in the future. Some may worry about the risk of offering a money back guarantee. However, the majority of consumers consider it too much of a hassle to return something or ask for a refund. It is unlikely a business will go out of business just because a guarantee is offered.<sup>16</sup>

The business needs to be protected as much as possible with some kind of insurance. A customer may be injured because of the tentmaking business. They may even try make the injury much worse than it is, which could destroy the entire business. God is in charge and He is the one who protects, but it is wise to do all that is possible to try and protect the business. In the school classroom, cameras will help to show what really took place if there is a dispute. The play areas must be safe for children. The hot coffee should be out of reach of the children. Purchasing

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<sup>16</sup> Sean Rasmussen, "Why You Should Offer A Money Back Guarantee?" Aussie Internet Marketing Blog | SEO Tips | Social Media Advice | Blogging Strategies | Web 2.0 Tips, March 2010, <http://seanseo.com/internet-business/money-back-guarantee/>, (accessed January 07, 2012).

insurance may prevent the seriously injured person from causing the business to close its doors if the matter is taken to court and the ruling goes against the business. If there is a dispute, the courts usually side with the small, injured individual and not with the big, powerful business.

According to the Small Business Administration, fifty percent of businesses fail within the first year and ninety-five percent of businesses fail within the first five years. Experts say that there are several key factors that must be avoided if the business is going to succeed. Some of these factors that cause businesses to fail include: the business was started for the wrong reasons, poor management, insufficient capital, wrong location, lack of planning, over expansion, and no website.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, Just as God chose the right time to send His Son, He has positioned western churches and missionaries to carry the gospel to the world. The Romans made roads and made travel easier and safer. The westerner has had a special pass, internationally, for many years. Whereas other ethnic groups are questioned, held in suspect, considered guilty until proven innocent, the westerner has had a free pass to many situations. The US dollar has been the global currency for some time. All of these advantages may not last long but, presently, God has paved a way for the western missionary and now is the time.

Some may say, “Why reinvent the wheel.” Why bother? There are already enough businesses and schools that have a demand for skilled employees and workers in many parts of the world without the all the troubles of starting and operating a new business. The answer is that

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<sup>17</sup> Patricia Schaefer, “Why Small Businesses Fail: Top 7 Reasons Startups Fail And How To Avoid Failure,” *Business Ideas for Small Business and Home Business*, 2011, <http://www.businessknowhow.com/startup/business-failure.htm>, (accessed December 16, 2011).

this kind of business can help the missionary/worker be flexible with their time, giving greater freedom and opportunity for ministry. This is about freedom. A missionary businessperson who owns and operates a business and understands the priorities can arrange their entire business to position everyone involved to be the best and most effective evangelists. He is in the best position to build a solid team of missionary workers. The missionary/business owner is able to provide the channel that gives others the opportunity to serve overseas. Many missionaries can and do enter a country as English teachers. The school pays all the bills, but eight months a year they belong to that school. The school may even have the missionary/English teacher sign a paper saying that he will not share his faith, nor try to convert the local students in any way. This is about freedom to serve God as the missionary is led and the tentmaking missionary strategy is one of the best tools available for the Father's businessperson.

A questionnaire was sent to several missionaries and business people working outside of their home country in hopes that their answers would help and encourage future tentmaking missionaries (See Appendix A). They were asked if they considered themselves a Tentmaker? Why they consider this or why they did not? They were asked about the advantages and disadvantages of being a Tentmaker? They were asked if they would encourage others to do what did? They were asked about the advice they would give to new prospective tentmakers? They were also asked to give a definition of a tentmaker?

Some of the tentmaking missionaries worked for local companies, some of them worked for foreign companies, and some of them worked for their own company. Most of them considered themselves tentmaking missionaries because they worked a job for pay outside the

church. The advantages were threefold: making an income, getting close to the local people, and access to the country. The disadvantages were more diverse and personal. They would all advise others to be involved in a tentmaking ministry.

This chapter ends with this encouragement taken from Proverbs, “The blessing of the LORD makes a person rich, and he adds no sorrow with it” (Pr 10:22). When the Lord is not in a situation, the way is often harder than it has to be. When the Lord is not in goals pursued, health, family, and reputations can often be forfeited. Believers can be notorious for taking God’s name in vain by attaching it to something He wants no part of. Unnecessary sorrow and heartache accompany that path. When the Lord is in a situation, things seem to fall into place. It does not mean that there will be no mountains to climb or challenges ahead, but nothing *has* to be forced, the timing *will* be right, the right team *will* be put together and there *will* be a certain joy knowing that He is leading the way.

## CONCLUSION

Tentmaking is a biblical missions strategy that God included in His word and was used by Paul on all three of his missionary journeys. Paul not only supported his own life but also his ministry projects, as well as his whole missionary team. A tentmaking missions strategy is a multifaceted tool that offers several advantages. It can help a missionary enter into a country by providing a visa. It can help provide jobs for new missionaries and jobs for the locals. It can help fund the missionary’s life and ministry. It can also put the missionary closer to the local people that need to be reached with the gospel. This project was written to encourage missionaries to



consider a tentmaking ministry.

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## APPENDIX A

## TENTMAKER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

## A. Chuck

1. Did or do you consider yourself a Tentmaker? Why or why not?

Yes, because I viewed my job teaching at a secular college to be a door for doing ministry.

2. What do/did you think was/is your advantages to being a Tentmaker?

I think the advantages include being able to support yourself financially and having a natural connection to local culture and language.

3. What is/was your disadvantage or struggle?

Disadvantages are that your availability for ministry work is limited since you have to focus a significant amount of time on your work outside of ministry.

4. Would you encourage others to do what you did/do?

Yes!

5. What advice would you give to new prospective tentmakers?

Get a degree in something you enjoy doing and that you can leverage as a gospel witness.

6. What is your definition of a tentmaker?

Someone who works a non-ministry related vocation to support themselves in doing ministry.

## B. Daniel

1. Did or do you consider yourself a Tentmaker?

Yes.

Why or why not?

I consider myself to be a "Tentmaker" because the main purpose for my life is to Serve the Lord and to be able to do that (particularly overseas) my main means of support for myself and my

ministry comes from funds that I make by working. Also, I was commissioned and sent to do this work and still have churches and people behind what I am doing.

2. What do/did you think was/is your advantages to being a Tentmaker?

I believe my main advantages in being a “Tentmaker” are experienced in the country in which I am working. I have been in two countries this way, Japan and China. In Japan I had opportunities to talk and associate with different people, especially men, that I do not believe I would have been able to have otherwise. I know many missionaries in Japan and, at least in Japan, there are some very strong stigmas attached to them. Almost all of the people I know (again, especially the men) have a difficult time reaching out to other men and especially business men. Most families seem to find difficulty reaching into their local communities as well since they are seen as “never going to work”. Having a real business/profession has opened many doors that I believe would have been closed otherwise.

There is also the advantage of being able to go to most places in the World. Business can take you many places that otherwise would be difficult to get to.

3. What is/was your disadvantages or struggles?

Many:

Keeping the business going. But our Father is faithful.

Balance.

Acceptance by the traditional church.

Jealousy of those who have full support.

Inferiority complexes. specially feeling like you are a second class M. Some of this is self-inflicted, some is inspired by others who have support or churches that have traditional values concerning missionaries. I still remember my foreign M class at Moody, the first week our prof. let us know that there was NO room for independent M’s on the field).

4. Would you encourage others to do what you did/do?

Yes, but I would encourage them to know what they are getting into. I do not think everyone is cut out to be a “Tentmaker”. I would like to see the church develop this more so that it is actually more of a mainstream concept, with more understanding and support from people back home, whether that be the US, Brazil, Aust. or any country.

5. What advice would you give to new prospective tentmakers?

Do not do it unless you cannot help but do it.

Do not go unless you have a church behind you. Just because it is called “tentmaking” I do not

see it as an independent venture. I still believe one is sent.

6. What is your definition of a tentmaker?

One sent to do the work (of the L.O.R.D) but whose main means of support for ministry and mission is produced by the labor of their own hands.

C. Patrick

1. Did or do you consider yourself a Tentmaker? Why or why not?

Yes, I would consider myself one because I work for a living and am here to witness for Christ.

2. What do/did you think was/is your advantages to being a Tentmaker?

- The only way in many of the 10/40 countries
- Opportunities at work (Can reach people that traditional m's can't reach)
- Gives you a good position in society (people can relate to you)
- Your witness serves as a model to other workers.
- Less hoops to jump through than a traditional m (raising support)
- All Christians can do this (not just Bible school graduates and seminarians).

3. What is/was your disadvantages or struggles?

- Lack of support – emotional, spiritual
- Lack of direction
- No team support
- Finding a suitable job – interesting, stable, possessing opportunities
- Requires ability to self-start ministry
- Hard to see results
- Your job may overwhelm you.
- Witnessing through/at your work.
- People back home don't see you as a missionary but you make the same sacrifices as one.

4. Would you encourage others to do what you did/do?

I would encourage the vast majority of Christians back home to explore cross cultural

opportunities now available in their jobs. More and more companies have branches overseas.

Also, students can get involved in study abroad programs or decide to do their graduate work in another country. They are now so many opportunities.

Tentmaking is the only way to access many of the remaining unreached people groups so serious m should consider it as a viable method.

5. What advice would you give to new prospective tentmakers?

- Learn the language.
- Be excellent at your job.
- Take advantage of internet resources (iTunes U, Christian websites, etc. . . .)
- Use Skype or other online meeting software to contact people.
- Buy Logos (Vyrso) /Bibleworks for personal bible study (use eBooks instead of shipping books)
- Raise up a team of people to pray for you regularly
- Develop a “board of directors” to help and guide you along the way.
- Find other foreign Christians in your area for fellowship.
- Don’t spend too much time with other foreigners!
- Spend time with local people.
- Choose a job that will bring you in contact with the people you want to reach.
- Find a local m and see if you can assist him or her.

6. What is your definition of a tentmaker?

<http://www.christianvocations.org/online/cv.nsf/Pages/Jobs@Tentmaking-FAQs?opendocument>

“Someone who uses their skills (professional, business, or trade skills) to work for a living in a cross cultural situation and to witness for Christ in their daily lives”

D. Paul

1. Did or do you consider yourself a Tentmaker? Yes

Why or why not?

A significant portion of our finances/support came as a result of our work at the university/universities.

2. What do/did you think was/is your advantages to being a Tentmaker?

A sense of freedom (in the good sense). Easy to explain a reason to be in the host country. They could identify with our role. Gave us an instant group of colleagues and friends. Also opened up doors as colleagues got to know us “up close” for lengthy periods of time.

3. What is/was your disadvantages or struggles?

In some situations loneliness could be a factor. Absence of kindred spirits for encouragement although for us in both locations this was not the case.

4. Would you encourage others to do what you did/do? Absolutely!

5. What advice would you give to new prospective tentmakers?

It is essential that tentmakers be tentmakers on this side of the ocean. They must see their occupation as a way to glorify...In other words, a boat ride doesn't make a tentmaker! Also tentmaking means integrity, excellence and all those Daniel like things. More than a Good Book on the desk!

6. What is your definition of a tentmaker?

A tentmaker is someone who takes his God given skills/trade/abilities into areas that need light with an end to advance the k of God.

## VITA

Chris White

## PERSONAL

Born: January, 1961

Married: Anne C. Done, December 28, 1985.

Children: Philip White, born August 5, 1987.

Annette White, born July 28, 1989.

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## EDUCATION

B.A., Baptist Bible College 1983.

M.Div., Luther Rice, 1995.

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## ORDINATION

Ordination: June, 1990, South Dade Baptist Church,  
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## MINISTRY

Youth Minister, Associate Pastor, 1983–1990.

Missionary to Asia, Through the BBFI, 1990–present.