

Tentmaking: The Practical Dimension

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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March 1998, El Paso, Texas
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