

Tentmaking Ministry

[1] About 10 or 11 years ago, in a similar consultation organized by Lausanne Canada hosted by Tyndale Seminary, the question of any need for a formal seminary training for career missionaries was raised. The consensus was still a “Yes”. It is reminded that as both Dr. Bob Morris and Craig Shugart very clearly stipulated that work is ministry and we are required to show ministry results at the end of the day, therefore in general a formal diploma/certificate [e.g. Perspectives course] should be required for also, and even tentmaking missionaries – especially there is a higher chance that they will be receiving less of a support in the form of camaraderie and prayer from their own mission in the field where the intensity of the battle being fought is more than severe, they better have more advance preparation in order to do their ministry well. Remember, our ministry life and effectiveness are not measured by the number of years we spend out in the field, but are the measure of influencing souls.

[2] “Perspectives Study Program” or *Perspectives courses* are available in English, Cantonese and Mandarin. For details, please contact Rev. Dr. Peter Chan/CCST, Rev. C. Y. Yan/OMF, Rev. William Leung (Alliance Global Serve Limited 環球宣愛協會有限公司), Rev. Dr. John Chan/CBM, or Pastor Albert Wai (retired from SEND).

[3] More attention has been given to UPG’s [Unreached People Groups] in recent years. However, especially for smaller churches or churches beginning to engage mission work, more thoughts and prayers should be devoted to seek after God’s will for them to maybe contact UUPG’s [Unengaged Unreached People Group], where a research of whom had already been undertaken and is awaiting someone to “pick them up”.

[4] The state of “low income” label [in US\$ equivalents] applied to some countries can only be used as a guide, and not as a guise to view a country with cultural glasses on unknowingly. The income drawn by a bank teller in for example HongKong, India, and Canada ranks differently within the employment market, which in turn is affected differently by the degree of respect by the other populace, as the locale they are operating in demands different output, skill sets, endurance, and performance definition.

Henceforth, such labels should be used as a tool in understanding a country’s cultural make-up, economic structure and basic education requisite.

[5] The “normal” mission sending structure adopted by many churches needs much to be desired.

While there are exceptional inspirations bestowed by the Lord to an individual or a church to execute certain plans of God, remember those are exceptions. And exceptions are exceptions. We are only called to implement Gods plan in the most usual and “mundane” same structures and manners. In his daily devotional “My Utmost for His Highest” for 15 June, Oswald Chambers wrote: “There are times when there is no illumination and no thrill, but just the daily round the common task.” We don’t go around looking for exceptions and miracles. “The saint realizes that it is God Who engineers circumstances, consequently there is no whine, but a reckless abandon to Jesus.”, wrote Oswald on 13 June.

In general, the mission sending model is the triangle of “the missionary, the sending church of the missionary, and the mission organization.” However, if we were to set out on a mission work, short-term or long, traditional or tentmaking, we must make sure we have the eternal goal in mind and in sight. Therefore, the fourth element of the seminary has to be taken

into the picture. In short, whatever the missionary finds what was taught was not applicable because of whatever reasons, the missionary should inform the seminary he/she graduated from, so that the opinion can be clarified, researched, and eventually “broadcast” to the other educational/theological institutions.

In my mind, originally I thought I read this from an article by Dr. Enoch Wan written for publication for Lausanne III in 2010. But despite my efforts, I could not locate back to the original source.

[6] In running BAM, be sure to differentiate different type of business structures and contents that are available.

You can start a business and hiring only Christians [from local in the field and/or from home country] depending on the business climate prevalent in the field. The entire staff will of course undertake all business transactions with the same faith and conviction.

Or you can start a business employing anyone who theoretically have the requisite local experience for your business without being a believer, or a mix, and you are to influence their work habits and faith in customer service and relations, etc.

[7] In a separate attachment, there is the PowerPoint of the presentation by Craig Shugart for your reference.

[8] Further, attached is a summation of Tentmaking Ministry through Lausanne II held in 1989. The mode of ministry has practically not changed.

[9] Also, there is a tentmaking handbook published by the Canadian tentmakers Network back in the late 1990s also appearing as an attachment.

These handbook and materials are of course dated. They are intended to serve as a basis to inspire readers to strategize and reform the ministry for the future.

[10] Included in the wide arena of tentmaking ministry is the “Mission Ministry of the Other Category” is work in the political realm, as a Member of Parliament [federally], Member of Provincial Parliament [provincially], Councillor [member of town/city Council], assistants to any of the above positions, their adjutants and aides, etc., to as unimaginably high as the Premier, the Prime Minister, the Lieutenant Governor [the late David Lam for one], the Governor General, and so on so forth. It takes a person who has the gift of giving justice all the time, instead of constantly seeking justice; willing to be a doormat and not to seek respect and social glory.

[11] For local cross-cultural mission ministry, there is the TIM [Tyndale Inter-cultural Ministry] Centre of Tyndale University College & Seminary [TUCS] who researches and have data available for over 100 countries and ethnic peoples who together constitute the population mix of the country of Canada. Such data are available free. To subscribe to this, and also their occasional report [sample in attachment], contact Dr. Robert Cousins/Consultant or Rev. Dr. Tim Tang, Centre Director.

Inter-cultural Ministry Training

[1] Many of us think that one's inter-cultural disposition will naturally, automatically, and subconsciously be planted into our born character given time.

A sister I know, has been in Canada since four decades ago. Once into Canada, an international and larger than huge company hired her and pretty soon her job required her to fly out-of-town and out-of-country for meetings and conferences.

Whenever she was in town, she also devoted herself faithfully to serving the church on weekdays and weekends with her husband in a Chinese church.

For the past 10 years, she finished MDiv and DMin at Tyndale. One time, she confided with me that doing the inter-cultural assessment really surprised her. She thought that decades of working in a large international company with many employees of high diverse ethnic origins would have enriched her capability being inter-cultural and cross-cultural. But a test indeed showed her to the contrary – and the points revealed by the assessment were true too.

You need to be intentional in changing if not correcting your behavior when encountering an inter-cultural/cross-cultural situation in order the God-desired effect of the encounter by you in that particular situation may be achieved. In that sister's case, that fact that she had not been encountering much resistance in chairing meetings in your department for many years did not mean her instructions had been well thought or well received. Sometimes, other aspects of her personality might have helped, or a notch of innocent insistence from her to her subordinates allowed her to have her way over their suggestion which could be just as good or even better. She, was the boss still after all.

Therefore, it is more than of paramount importance that a Christian worker well intentioned to bring across the message of Jesus Christ to both in Christian dialogue or the skeptic and non-believing, need to take the "Inter-cultural Developmental Index" assessment from Drs. Cousins/Tang the sooner the better. It is not a pass/fail examination, but is a survey to let yourself know how effective inter-culturally/cross-culturally you are.

[2] Other courses that the TIM Centre organizes are similar to the seminary, topical or Bible. Apart from their courses are shorter and less home work is required [hence much cheaper], the championing differentiation is that all courses are taught with the inter-cultural angle explained of the topic or Bible passage/book. More than a few students started with taking our courses which eventually they took the TIM Centre courses they had taken, to transformed themselves into seminary programs, becoming seminary students, finally seminary graduates.

[3] "From the Margins to the Centre: The Diaspora Effect" is the first book TIM Centre produced last September, with writers to include Rev. D.r Tim Tang, Consultation speaker Dr. Robert Cousins, Tyndale Professors [e.g. Dr. Bob Morris], and other heavy-weight inter-cultural teachers. The book has already been nabbed into Tyndale's curriculum, by mission agencies and organizations who are intent on updating themselves on the inter-cultural agenda.

For information on all of the above, please contact Dr. Cousins, Dr. Tang, or the Tyndale Bookstore for the book.

Short-Term Ministry Teams

[1] Re participant Ed Vencio/SEND International of Canada.

EV brought up the “Best Practices of Short-Term Ministry Team” from the US, particularly in response to the omission of debriefing by the panelists.

Author had led STM Teams from 2006 for some 7 years.

Not only my STM Team Members would get debriefing, they got debriefed 3 times:

FIRST group debriefing with local mission leaders who were involved with that particular mission; hence before we left the field. Local mission leaders would usually be from SEND, and/or local church/NGO. Purpose is to have an immediate reflection of the ministry that was completed say only yesterday.

SECOND is the personal debriefing with individual team members as soon as they are back home, say within 2 to 3 or 4 weeks. There in private and confidence, and after more things and more thoughts about the team ministry had set more deeply and more maturely in their minds. Here I will bring in the question for their future – immediate and long-run.

THIRD is again the group debriefing with all team members meeting together again, and share their feelings with the other members. Oftentimes, new and better thoughts would spring up right during this session.

Actually, before leaving the field and when time allows, I would still have the personal debriefing with as many team members as possible. It may not be as deep as you wished you could go with the member depending on the departure time of the member, but some off-the-top of the head ideas and points from them would be worth noting because these often are the most important.

[2] Re overall training of team members before departure.

SEND has had this STM team member training [orientation] required for all team members before departure. Depending on the team make-up [maturity and distribution], the normal orientation is done over 10 weeks, one 3-hour session per week.

Special training are available for those who are team leaders, or on the way to be team leaders, usually at our headquarters in Farmington/Michigan.

On those 2 or 3 weekends such sessions are held in MI, I will drive 3 – 6 participants down starting on a Friday morning, to arrive there around 4-5 p.m., and session begins at 7 p.m. for to 10 p.m. Then Saturday starts at 8:30 a.m. and will dismiss at 4 p.m. sharp so that participants usually can get home by mid-night, without missing a beat for their Sunday responsibilities. Campus accommodation at SEND, registration fees and materials cost total about \$100; less for shared accommodation.

[3] Further to the above, those who received the training are automatically authorized to undertake the same training back at their church or organization. The only thing is that they shall order the (up-dated) training manuals [approx. US\$12 per] from SEND for each student every time they teach others.

NOTE:

For contact info on personalities concerned, kindly e-mail Albert.Wai.SendCanada@GMail.com.

Albert Wai (Retired), Fri. 19 July, 2019.