

word on training. We seem to be short on serious and systematic attempts to equip this marvelous marketplace workforce. If these words cause a flood of protests from groups doing proper training, then praise the Lord, because you have been very hard to find!

Allow me to lay a foundation for thinking about training by discussing the training attitude, current training developments, the climate of training and training as it relates to the local church.

### The Training Attitude

Training is an attitude of mind before it is a programme. We either believe deeply that training is worthwhile or else we waste people's time. Here are five statements that expand on this matter.

*Don't bother to train anyone today unless it is for the mission field.*

The principal of the seminary where I teach tells us not to bother teaching any subject unless we can teach with a mission heart and a mission focus. That is not easy with something like Church History or Theology but it can be done. Training is not the boring stuff we get out of the way before we start the real thing. Training is what prepares the heart attitude. Mission is what training is all about, whether it be mission to Western culture or across cultures to the Two Thirds World.

Have too many Western training institutions got into a rut, pigeon-holed the component subjects and developed watertight delivery and assessment methods, without a mission intent to bind them together? There was a powerful statement last year from Jim Reapsome about mission and the local church that could just as well apply to training: "When people walk into a church ...they must smell world-wide outreach for Jesus Christ as if incense were burning. The smoke of missionary passion must permeate the whole place beginning with worship, pastoral prayer and down through all the edu-

cational programs and various ages and social groups. Everyone must boldly declare, Our Church exists for missions to the ends of the earth."<sup>5</sup>

That was about churches. It has to be true also about training institutions and programs. Training is an attitude and that attitude is mission.

*Hands on, brains off won't last the distance.*

Let me explain this odd phrase. Many people want training to leave the ivory tower of academic study and teach/learn instead by doing—apprenticeship models, practical, down to earth stuff. "Get people on the job alongside experienced people and it will all come out all right."

I have no problems with practical training—none at all. But training also equips people to think and understand and grow in their knowledge and insight. To have a future, tentmaking needs people who can think deeply about what they do and that is built in by the right sort of training.

The tentmaking movement is light on theologians and missiologists. There is considerable debate about the delivery systems of modern ministry training.<sup>6</sup> Many models are being offered<sup>7</sup> but none call for the complete absence of an underlying theology or sound biblical understanding.<sup>8</sup>

*Training aims to produce the reflective Christian, not the reflective materialist.*

That also is an odd phrase as well! Training is about producing an entire lifestyle. It has to start and finish with the worldview and value system of Jesus Christ, not with the latest management technique or conflict resolution course or self actualization technique. It is NOT about "I'm OK, you're OK." It is about Jesus Christ as Lord and my willingness to serve Him all my life in everything I do and say!

Hence, training aims to produce people who can relate the worldview of

Christ and the Bible to the setting round about them and make the right connections. Tentmakers are not spiritual technicians fitting together the latest fads; nor are they cross cultural tycoons who start the day with a prayer meeting and then suck the local market dry. Rather, they are Christians in heart, body, mind and soul—Christians who know how to think through Christian principles in a practical way. However, that does not happen overnight. It takes the right sort of training to build those gifts and attitudes into people. Even Jesus took three years to train His disciples.

*Training today is about formation, information and application.*

The training process is an integrated and integrative one. It is about the person, their skill and knowledge level and their performance capabilities. However, they develop these aspects not in isolation but interwoven as a total process and integrated whole. For this reason, there is no single trainer or training body. Later we shall see how many cooperate to form the person. The point is that the formal training process is related to other processes, not something we do when we "send people away to do a course." The "course" they do must be in harmony with the formative and practical aspects of the training. These things have all been said before in relation to ministerial and career mission training. However, the inertia factor in many of these training processes has been difficult to overcome. While training for tentmaking is still being formulated, it is easier to get it right. It is encouraging to note in a number of examples of training programs emerging from the non-Western sector that this integration is woven in from the start.<sup>9</sup>

*Training for a significant career in tentmaking needs to start as early as possible.*

Training is a long term process. Too often we feel the need is there, the job is there so as teachers we throw in a

residential training programs.

Concerning adult learning methods, we need to reflect on the following statement:

- 50 and over learn by reading the manual.
- 35 and under learn by trying the controls.
- The rest are just confused.

Here is just one example of the changes. People as old as I ask our children to fix the computer or programme the video. We are scared to hit the keys in case we get it wrong. We struggle with the music and dress, the language and food fads of various sub-cultures. When I am told today I have a learning curve ahead of me, I usually find myself looking straight up! Because the generations are so different, so are the ways we train them. Tentmaker training will have people of all generations, many professional backgrounds,

diverse ethnic origins and various sub-cultures all thrown together. We need to design our training to reflect that because in a field setting these are the people who will be there together.

*If you can't measure it, many people today don't want it.*

Younger generations want learning that results in outcomes. Most tentmaker programs in the past have aimed simply at orientation, a smattering of skills and principles sufficient to ensure survival. Now people want to have proof they have done the learning, a measurable outcome, not for the certificate on the wall but for their resumé, their future employer or for their own motivation. Many missions and governments reject the person who says, "I have lots of experience but never bothered to get any credit." When we design our training, we need to consider a format that can be measured. It is amazing what such a requirement does to the qual-

ity of the course as well!

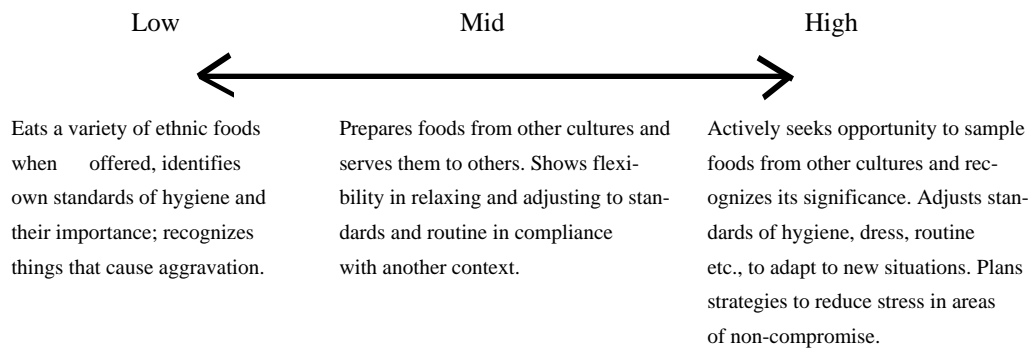
The means of measuring have changed too. Training aims now at competence, not competition. Traditional Western training methods grade people according to the results they obtain in tests and exams. They often joke that a lecturer needs a two storied house so they can put the exam papers on the stairs in order of merit. Today we understand more clearly the component skills of mission and have designed programs to move people along a competency continuum. A competency approach has a major effect on student attitudes and also on course design. Students who have not studied formally for some years are far more relaxed in this sort of environment. And a competency approach also allows training that builds practical and theoretical skills into an integrated

them, we need to communicate in a format they understand.

Related to this is the fact that "receiving churches" are asking for more than merely academic biblical and theological skills. Extensive surveys have uncovered a deep longing for missionaries (and tentmakers) whose spiritual formation, team skills and proven ministry skills are all well developed. Relational gifts outweigh academic achievements. Personality and family must be stable and adaptable. All of this comes with a listening ear and a servant heart. This means a whole team of people contribute to the training programme. The heart of it all is this: if we are going to train tentmakers, we must form the whole person, not simply communicate a bundle of biblical facts or technical skills.

#### Sample of Competency Continuum Based on the Competency Cluster, "Cross Cultural Skills"<sup>13</sup>

Competencies summary statement, demonstrating adaptability by eating ethnic foods, wearing appropriate clothing and adjusting to routines and possessions in a relaxed manner. Recognizes personal symptoms of stress and acts to alleviate it.



whole and lets people on the receiving end know exactly what the tentmaker can and cannot be expected to do.

Here is a brief example of a competency continuum:

The point of all this discussion is simple. The majority of prospective tentmakers are well trained professionals, students, business people or skilled trades people. They have learned their skills in a contemporary environment using current educational methods. In our enthusiasm to design training for

#### The Training Climate

*Training involves community but not always an institution.*

Mission today needs people able to cope with community that has been tested in relationship. Traditionally this has been a residential task. However living in harmony is not an automatic product of living together. I recall the residential college that built six apartments for married students and provided only five clotheslines. So how is community to be achieved apart from

champions as much as it needs strong practitioners. Fortunately, while there are as yet few books on tentmaking as such, there is a flood of fine material on Christians in the marketplace. When the people in the pews each Sunday know what to do for the Kingdom on Monday, then mission will be in good hands both at home and across cultures. As a start, how about looking at the *Word and Life Study Bible*, the fruit of many years work by Pete Hammond of *Marketplace*, designed to explore the ways in which ordinary people live effectively from Monday to Friday.

*Too many pastors think the people in the pews exist to keep the Church going, but in Scripture the pastor exists to keep the people going; for in the end it is the whole people of God who do the whole mission of God.*

It was only towards the end of 28 years as a pastor did I realize how little difference I made on Mondays. I taught and exhorted and visited and loved and counseled and married and buried and all the other things a pastor does. But I had no specific plan to make a difference on Monday. Then I tried visiting some people at their workplace in their lunch hour, found out about the job scene of the people, used workplace illustrations and prayers in services, held workplace services in which people came in their work clothes, talked about career choices and workplace ethic—but I needed to do more. Churches can gobble up all available time and all available people. We need to realize the Sunday service is just a railway station where the troops stop briefly on the way to the battle front to get refreshments and supplies and we need to design it to get people ready for life at the front, not life at the station.

My favorite statement about all of this can be summed up as follows:

*If you want to set the church on fire, you will find more fuel in the pews than the pulpit.*

Tentmakers and career missionaries

are different in many ways. Neither is “superior” to the other, neither is “needed more” in today’s world. God needs both approaches and perhaps many more besides. However, when we do send tentmakers into the battle zones, let’s send them trained, ready, and equipped. They do not deserve second best in either equipment or training. They hurt just as easily as career missionaries, need spiritual resources just as much, have just as valuable a message to communicate. Also it is just as distressing when they come back home beaten and depressed. May we provide today’s missionary tentmakers the best and most appropriate training available!

### End Notes

1. Christy Wilson is a senior statesman of the modern tentmaking movement. He wrote a foundational text on tentmaking and has also encouraged and mentored many tentmakers over the past quarter century. His book is Wilson, J. Christy Jr 1979 *Today’s Tentmakers*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House

3. Report on *Consultation on Missionary Attrition* convened by World Evangelical Fellowship Missions Commission, London, 1995

4. e.g. Taylor, William D. ed. 1991 *Internationalizing Missionary Training*. Grand Rapids: Baker

5. Reapsome, Jim. *World Pulse*. April 21, 1995

6. e.g. Anderson, Ray S. 1993 *Ministry on the Fireline*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press. pp197ff

7. e.g. Dearborn, T. “Preparing New Leaders for the Church of the Future,” *Transformation*. December and Elliston, E. “Church Based Training” *Strategies for Today’s Leader*. Vol 32 No 1 1995. pp8-10

8. e.g. Wells, D. 1993 *No Place for Truth*. Grand Rapids: Wm Eerdmans.

9. Taylor, William D. ed. 1991 *Internationalising Missionary Training*. Grand Rapids Baker Book House. pp 43-189

10. *Strategic Careers Project*, 1624 21st Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904 USA.

11. Chandran B. and D., Thomson R.

and Rajkumar S. 1995 *Breaking New Ground*. New Delhi: The Tentmaker Centre.

12. For information on this group, contact Tentmakers International Exchange, P.O. Box 45880-0880, Seattle, WA 98145, USA.

13. Massey, Brian. *Training* (Published by Missions Commission of WEF), September 1994. p 6

14. Ferris, R ed. 1995 *Establishing Ministry Training*. Pasadena: William Carey Library. See especially appendices B, C and D

15. A group with extensive experience in this area is *Mission Training International*. See Lewis, J. ed. 1993 *Working Your Way to the Nations*. Pasadena: Wm Carey Library. Ch 4

16. *ibid*.

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Photo here  
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