

**TENTMAKING BY NUMBERS ...  
A GLANCE AT THE MODERN MOVEMENT:  
*Derek Christensen***

Want to outline a 1, 2 3 and 4 on tentmaking:

**There is 1 overwhelming reality** in the tentmaking world today, namely the fact that a considerable proportion of the world's cross cultural mission now has to fit one way or another into a tentmaking-type description, working in countries and areas where a missionary identity is no longer possible but a secular identity remains an option.

**There are 2 surprising consequences of this:**

The first, a great deal of mission activity, organisation, literature, training and interest acts as though this is not the case. There are relatively few agencies designated as tentmaking agencies, practically no journals or magazines, very few references in mission articles and few courses available in seminaries and Bible Colleges.

The second is that churches are often quite confused as well, hardly knowing how to relate to these people who go to far flung places and look anything but 'missionary' in their outward trappings and indeed, may not even want to be referred to on a church notice board and often leave their surname off correspondence and refer to their country of work in very vague terms.

**There are 3 very encouraging developments in the world of tentmaking however:**

The first is the way in which many major mission agencies have adapted the way they operate to include a tentmaking thrust in their work.

The second is the huge growth of interest in some of the most needy places and the development of both strategies and groups to respond to those needs.

The third is the tremendous encouragement from a country like the Philippines where wise Christian leaders are using the phenomenon of the Filipino Diaspora to engage in highly significant work especially in the Middle East. Other countries with a diaspora are also doing this, especially South Korea.

**And there are 4 great challenges that we face as a movement:**

1 is the task of coordinating what is happening so that we create synergies of action, sources of information and signals of encouragement for those within the movement and joining it.

2 is the challenge of maintaining unity of purpose as we diversify in strategies, especially as the Business as Mission arm of tentmaking gains high profile in many areas of the Christian missions movement

3 is the task of training – developing training that is tentmaker specific, delivery friendly and easily accessible from wherever the people are who need it.

4 is the challenge to share the message and build the networks so that we become a genuine and accepted part of the world mission family, learning from and contributing to, what is happening under God's grace today.