

Why I use T4T with Hindus

By BDB

Intro

There is a great need for the gospel to reach and bless the Hindu for whom Christ died. In the past India has seen encouraging response to the Gospel from the oppressed communities and from tribal. In our day we are seeing a new response to Christ from the caste Hindu. One of the approaches to Hindu ministry that is facilitating many Hindus coming to Christ is through T4T. We have been using T4T and seeing response among the Hindu.

A small group of us took T4T in January of 2003 from author of T4T Fa Hein,* a Chinese American missionary with the International Mission Board of SBC. He told us very simply how he used T4T to see incredible response in China where there was no response before. In November 2000 Fa Hein trained 30 people in an area of China with no churches. By the end of 2001 there were 906 small groups and 10,000 new believers.

Since that time we have trained many Hindu background believers and we have been seeing many Hindus coming to Christ and new house churches started by these new believers. T4T stands for *Training for Trainers*. In T4T every believer becomes a trainer. The new believer is transformed into a multiplying trainer by using very simple concepts that can be passed on from new believer to new believer.

1. Evangelism

The Engine that drives T4T is evangelism. In T4T we address two major reasons why most Christians do not share their faith. The first reason is that they do not know what to say. The second reason is they do not know who to tell the gospel too.

We give a simple but thorough training to help each believer share their testimony. The term story is used rather than testimony to emphasize the simplicity and to incorporate the telling of the gospel to any situation. Now the new Hindu background believer knows what to say in sharing the gospel, tell your story.

We use an exercise asking each new Hindu background believer to list and write down one hundred family and friends they know who are not believers in Christ. For the Hindu background new believer this is an easy exercise. I have seen generational Christians struggle to list even a few unbelievers in their circle of family and friends. After they make this list we ask them to prioritize the list and to identify the top five and challenge them to share Christ with those five people in one week and follow up to find out how it went. Now we have answered the second questions that keeps new believers from sharing faith, who do I say the gospel too. Now they have their list of family and friends to tell.

Using T4T with Hindus captures the power of transformation in the new believers. Those who come to Christ are taught to share their faith right away. Those closest around them have seen a change in the one who shares with them and this adds impact to the words they speak. In one case I was training a group of 10 Hindu background believers in T4T. They came back after the training and reported 30 Hindu high caste Hindus had come to Christ. This was exciting in itself, but what happened next was incredible. I told them that when we meet next time we would not discuss whom they had led to Christ. We would only discuss whom they led to Christ and had trained to share their story and helped them in telling others of Christ.

When they came back they reported that those 30 new believers had led 270 people to Christ, including those who the new believers taught also to share their faith who in-turn led others to Christ. This is where evangelism turns from addition to multiplication.

Why did the number of new believers grow so much? There was a major shift in how evangelism was done. Even though the 10 people I was training were new believers from Hindu background their T4T was part of a more comprehensive two year training that made them “experts”.

When Eshwar* shared the gospel with Ramesh there would be a change in Ramesh when he came to Christ. Ramesh’s cousin Shivakumar would see the change in his cousin Ramesh. After this Ramesh would ask Eshwar to come and share the gospel with his cousin Shivakumar. Probably Shivakumar would have come to Christ, but Eshwar would be so stretched he could hardly find the time to get to all the places to share the gospel.

In T4T Eshwar trains Ramesh to share the gospel through simply telling his story of how he came to Christ. When Shivakumar becomes a believer in Christ the gospel has come through Ramesh. If Ramesh can share the gospel then Shivakumar realizes so can he. He is challenged to share with five family members right away. There is a powerful dynamic at work when the new believer begins to share his faith and evangelism becomes normative and contagious.

2. Community Issues

Another important question that T4T addresses is, “What do I do if they say yes?” New believers are taught to expect others to come to Christ and they are taught what to do when they come to Christ. There are many occasions where a Hindu comes to Christ and is ready to stand for Christ and share with his fellow Hindus, but he was encouraged to leave his family. The emphasis has traditionally been, “Come out and be separate.”

In T4T the emphasis is not to leave family and community, but to stay in your family and community and win them to Christ. T4T teaches the Hindu that God wants to save your Hindu family members through you. Using three Old Testament examples, Noah, Lot and Rehab and four New Testament examples of Geresene Demoniac, Cornelius, Lydia and the Philippian jailer the new Hindu background believer is strongly encouraged to stay home and win their family to Christ.

The Geresene Demoniac wanted to leave his family and community (Mark 5). Jesus told him to, “Go home to your people and report to them (tell your story) what great things the Lord has done.” Jesus was run out of that Decopolis area. When he came back a great multitude (4,000) would not leave his feet. What a difference one man saved by grace can make! Hindus are seeing the wisdom and have come to understand staying in their family and community and winning their Hindu family to Christ is the will of God for them. When this happens the gospel spreads rapidly among the Hindus.

Recently one of the leaders who have implemented T4T went to 30 villages where those trained in T4T were spreading the gospels. He found 200 families who came to Christ from High caste Hindu background. There was not one individual who had come to Christ but all came as entire families. Seeing whole families come to Christ has not been happening much in the past. The Hindus are coming to Christ by families and the gospel is spreading at a rapid pace because new believers remain in their community.

3. Follow up

With so many new believers coming to Christ from Hindu background at such a rapid rate the question is how solid are these new believers in their faith. I have been involved in an analysis among high caste Hindu new believers where hundreds were turning to Christ rapidly. The interviews showed that these new believers in Christ held solid evangelical and theological understanding with a strong commitment to the Bible. How can someone who has been a Hindu for forty years suddenly become solid in theological understanding? The first step in this transformation begins with good follow up after the Hindu turns to Christ.

T4T uses a six lessons format as the basic foundation blocks for the new believer. The first lesson for follow up is assurance of salvation. This lesson is thorough enough to be sure the Hindu has truly made a genuine saving faith commitment to Jesus Christ. There is enough in lesson one to cover faith in Christ, eternal life, the way of salvation, the cross, repentance, new life in Christ and assurance of salvation yet a lesson simple enough to be taught to others by a new believer.

This basic follow up further address the question a new believer has, “What do I do if they say yes?” In the example where Eshwar has led Ramesh to Christ it is very understandable that Ramesh has hesitations to share his story (testimony) with Shivakumar. What will Ramesh do if Shivakumar makes a commitment to Christ? Even if Ramesh has been a believer for two days he has already taken lesson one from Eshwar.

Now he now knows exactly what to do if Shivakumar makes a commitment to Christ. Ramesh, though a new believer in Christ teaches Shivakumar lesson one as he learned it from Eshwar. Ramesh can do this even if he still has not taken lesson two. In this case not only has Ramesh been a new believer for only two days he has shared his faith, seen a Hindu relative come to Christ and given that new believer the first basic discipleship lesson. There is immediate application and very rapid progress toward spiritual maturity.

Ramesh is doing ministry, leading others to faith and giving follow up lessons that some Christians who have been believers for years have never done. It becomes an obedience based faith. Ramesh has also modeled for Shivakumar that he can also share his faith and follow up on a new believer. The follow up enables the gospel to spread exponentially.

The six basic follow up lessons do not need to be done in six weeks. Since the gospel is moving along family lines there is more opportunity for meeting. Lessons can be done one each day. They can also be taught the same day they are learned.

Besides assurance of salvation the six basic follow up lessons cover, prayer, daily devotions, the church, God, and spreading the Gospel. The sixth lesson is a lead in to training the new believer to train others. There is a II Timothy 2:2 pattern built in. “*The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will be qualified to teach others.*”

4. House Church and Church Planting Movements

We used to say to the new believer, “We believer in the local church, now go find a good Bible believing church and join it.” Now we tell the new Hindu believer to start a new house church. This helps overcome some of the barriers that Hindus face if they were to attend an

existing church. The church members often eat non-vegetarian diets and the new Hindu believer would face problems at home.

When the new believer starts a house church he can form this church with his family members that have become believers. There are many Bible verses that indicate that New Testament churches met in the homes of the believers. (Romans 16:5, I Corinthians 16:19, Colossians 4:15 and Philemon 2)

When I took T4T with Fa Hein, he showed us a picture of a baptism in one of the house churches that took place using a giant pickle barrel. I tell those I train stories of new Hindu believers baptizing other new believers and forming a church. I show a picture of a house church baptism that took place in the house church setting, on a small pool on the roof of the house church or in the house's water storage tank.

There is a faster spiritual maturing process in the house church. Every believer in the house church is called upon to use their spiritual gifts right away. Because there is an emphasis on participative Bible study every believer becomes active. This calls on them to be active much faster than an environment when the new Hindu believer attends a meeting, sits in a pew and listens to a preached sermon, sometimes for months before teaching others.

The house church model can accommodate large numbers of new believers with the least barriers and they are reproducible. This rapid reproduction of house churches can build into a Church Planting Movement. More about this by downloading the booklet; *Church Planting Movements*.**

These house churches are a group of covenanted believers who practice baptism and the Lord's supper built around the five purposes of the church, Worship, Evangelism, Discipleship, Fellowship and Ministry. Working with Hindu background believers we call these five purposes God's Panchayat.

The house church model is more persecution proof for the Hindu background believer. A set aside compound with a building will disturb many radicals in the pioneer areas. When believers meet in homes especially when these meetings are based on family groups they are less restricted to meet and worship.

5. Ongoing discipleship, self feeders on the Word of God.

Hearing and responding to the gospel and basic follow up is only the beginning for the Hindu to grow in Christ. There must be an ongoing method of hearing and applying of God's Word. This can happen through participative Bible studies.

The leader of the participative Bible study asks basic questions to understand the Scripture passage and concludes with an application from the Word. Even a new believer can lead a study by asking: What does the passage say? What does the passage mean? What should I do? Meeting together brings accountability for an obedience based faith.

The participative Bible study is Word based and does not need an institutionally trained leader. In the case of Eshwar leading Ramesh to Christ, Ramesh or others in the newly formed church lead the study, not Eshwar. Eshwar's role is to be the "Shadow Pastor." He meets with Ramesh in the beginning to explain the passage and help him direct the study based on the context of the passage, but he is not present when the house church meets. Only

his influence, having disciplined Ramesh, is present. This will be the model Ramesh and Shivakumar use when the evangelism and follow-up produce many new believers. The homes are too small for any one church to grow too large. New churches are started and multiply rapidly using this pattern.

Because the studies are saturated with prayer and a commitment to hearing and obeying scripture the new believers remain solid in theology. The combination of the initial influence of the shadow pastor and the obedience based participative Bible study build in a self correcting element based on the Word of God.

6. Leadership development

We are always looking to raise up leaders to the next level. In T4T we use two avenues to build up leaders. One avenue is the Training Center and the other is the Mastertrainer. The training center is a location where T4T is conducted.

I spoke to a group of 27 Church planters. Now the T4T concept has changed how they think. Now they do not think of themselves as a church planter who plants a church or two. They think of themselves as **a Mastertrainer**, raising up twenty leaders who raise up more leaders each planting multiplying house churches. The vision transformed from dozens of new churches among Hindu to thousands of new churches in the same time frame.

We bring in the best practitioners of T4T to a Mastertrainer conferences where we do best practice benchmarking and Iron on Iron. As one leader shares how he overcame one of the barriers to multiplication the others raise to that level quickly.

In T4T every believer is established as an effective trainer to obey the commandments of Christ and share the gospel. When a new Hindu background believer is sharing his faith, following up new believers he has won to Christ, training others to share their faith and growing in the word of God in participative house fellowships he becomes a solid leader even if he has been a believer for a relatively short period of time.

Recently one of the Hindu background believers was asked, Are you a church planter? His reply was No, **I am a "leader planter."** He began to see the potential of a ministry of multiplication

7. Reproduction, a reproducible model.

Everything in T4T is kept deliberately simple so it can be put in practice by the new believer. The Model, assist watch and leave is at work. First model this for the new believer, assist him and leave them to do what they have been taught.

The T4T multiplication is built into the framework. It's a great thing to plant a church; It is a greater thing to plant multiplying churches. It is the greatest thing to train leaders to plant multiplying churches. Every aspect of T4T is designed to be reproduced; evangelism, follow-up, discipleship and the starting of new churches.

Conclusion

I stood before a group of 200 High Caste Hindu background believers, most of them new believers within the past two years. I asked them, When I hold up an apple before you what do you see? Most people will see an apple. A few visionaries will see a forest of apple trees

in that one apple. They plant the apple seeds, these seeds grow into apple trees that produce more fruit and still more seeds.

I told these Hindu background believers that I do not see two hundred new believers, I see a whole people touched by the gospel as you train all new believers to share Christ and they in turn also share Christ following up these new believers growing in the word in participative Bible studies and starting multiplying house churches. If you live this vision, I told them, the Gospel will cover your people (of twelve million) like the waters cover the sea. There was a general nodding in agreement. They could see what was happening among them already as a result of T4T and the principles of multiplication and even more important they saw the potential that lay ahead.

There is urgency in seeing multiple church planting movements among the Hindu. We have a great opportunity before us. I see using T4T as a time to bless the Hindu with Christ who loved them and died for them. The notes for T4T are available in the book *Church Planting Movements*.**

* name changed

** <http://www.churchplantingmovements.com/>