

the  
**HENRY** family

YOKED TOGETHER FOR THE FIELDS ARE WHITE TO HARVEST

✘ **TENTMAKING** ✘

*“and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.” (Acts 18:3 ESV)*

DEAR FRIENDS,

Paul was the original tent-maker, actually making tents to support himself on his missionary journeys. These days the term tentmaker has taken on a wider meaning, with some even dividing up tentmakers into five categories. Since 1996 we have been living in Mongolia via our vegetable business, “Bountiful Countryside.” Although to date we have not received any salary from our business, it has allowed us to live in Mongolia with relative ease. We call ourselves tentmakers (although we grow vegetables) because our business has given us a platform with which to live in our community as we seek to share the gospel.

Because of the seasonal nature of our business the amount of time it requires from us varies from month to month. I want to share in this letter some of what I do during the different seasons. At the beginning of 2007 I took over our accounting and bookwork from our previous part-time Mongolian accountant. I designed several spreadsheets that can serve as a record of our “books”, ledgers, transactions, etc. I might spend 2-3 hours twice a month entering in the expenses and income for our

company. I then monthly have to prepare a VAT (value added tax) report and turn that in at our local tax office. I also monthly prepare salary sheets for our employees and prepare a social security form that I turn in locally. Each month I make at least two trips to the banks downtown, to deposit sales money or to make tax payments, etc. Each of these trips to a tax office or the bank can end up taking several hours depending on the circumstances. Quarterly I have to prepare an additional 3-4 tax forms and balance our books and prepare a balance sheet. These accounting duties require some of my time all year round. In addition, if you think figuring out your 1040 is difficult, doing it in a foreign language is even harder. I end up reading tax laws and accounting practices in Mongolian to figure out what I’m supposed to do. This past January Tom and I drove down to our provincial capital (180km to the south/a 5 hour drive) to turn in our yearly tax reports. We drove in the middle of the night to arrive early in the morning and that night it happened to hit -50F, so we were very thankful for no breakdowns.



*Pray for Be-bish and his wife Nara. He is one of our full-time employees and a believer, although he often seems weak in his faith. His wife helps Barb with housework twice a week and has not shown any interest in spiritual things.*



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# *“Tentmaking done in the right way brings blessing to the community.”*

In the winter time we are busy selling and sorting our vegetables. We have one employee who lives at the root cellar yard with his family who is in charge of keeping the cellar above freezing via wood-stoves and does most of the sales. In addition there are 2-3 other employees who live in town who work for us full-time. They usually work 3-4 hours each morning at the cellar, sorting out next year's seed potatoes, helping to bag up vegetable orders, cleaning up, carrying produce between our two cellars and whatever else is needed. I usually help 2-3 mornings a week doing whatever it is they are doing. It is about a 20 minute walk from our home to the root cellar property.

In the spring time we are preparing our firewood for the next year, doing some maintenance on our equipment and then ground preparation and planting. Once it gets warm we get more busy as the rush is on to get everything planted by the end of May. May is especially busy as we go out usually each day from 8-5 plowing and preparing land, setting up irrigation equipment and then seeding our vegetables. One of our fields is about a 20 minute drive from town, the other is 45 minutes away, so our daily commute takes up a bit of time.

In the summer we have a little more free time as God grows our vegetables. We have several seasonal employees who live at each field who are in charge of the irrigation and guarding. I go to the fields 3-5 days a week, sometimes taking part-time help with me. We always have plenty of weeding to do by hand, mounding of potatoes, repairing our irrigation systems, giving advice to others that are planting nearby and much more. We do have two tractors and several pieces of equipment that help us get our work done. We are usually able to make two cuttings of our oats and then have to haul that up to our wintering spot for our animals.

In the fall we begin with our early harvest. As vegetables start coming on in August we harvest a little everyday or so and bring them in to town and sell them directly to restaurants or stores as it is too early to store them in our cellars. Starting in September our big harvest begins and lasts three weeks or so and takes up all our time as we get all our vegetables (last year 137 tons) from the field and into our cellars. It's a lot of digging, pulling, bucketing, hauling, loading, unloading, carrying and dumping for those weeks. We also have to take apart all our irrigation systems and bring them and all the other equipment back into town for the winter.

In addition to growing vegetables, we have a herd of over 500 animals. Fortunately we have 1-2 employee/herders that take care of them all year round. However, the animals still require our time. We make trips out to them to deliver fire wood, food for the herders and animals, medicine and other supplies. In the summer we are

preparing some of their food - oats. We give them shots several times a year, tag them, count them, count them again, try to keep track of them on our computer records, etc. In April we take a van-full of people to comb our cashmere goats. We also have to load up and move the herder (his gear and possessions) several times a year to give the animals new pasture. So while the animals do not require our attention day to day we still put time into them.

In addition it is surprising how much planning takes place to get all this done. It seems Tom and I are always talking in person or on the phone about some aspect of the business, or figuring out exactly what we're going to do tomorrow, and all of that eats up time. Also, it seems as though we always have one big building project each year. Last year we added on to one of our cellars, basically making a new cellar. Other years we've replaced some of our fences, built buildings for our animals at the wintering location, repaired bridges on the road to our field, attempted to reroute the river to come closer to our field and so on. We're hoping/planning this year to not have an extra project!

Well I hope this has given you a little flavor for what "Bountiful Countryside" demands of me. If you are interested in reading more about tentmaking, the book [Tentmaking Business as Missions](#) by Patrick Lai is excellent. In Christ,  
Jason & Barb

Don't forget to check out our website for new photos and information. Remember if you would like to give to us please send your gifts to STSM, their address is at the bottom of this page. And always, if you'd like to get this letter earlier and in color via your computer instead of the mail write us an e-mail asking to be put on our prayer letter PDF mailing list.

## **Prayer Requests**

- for our planning for the upcoming planting season
- for possibilities of using movies for evangelism in the countryside
- for the possibility of volunteering at the Bible Society in Ulaanbaatar for a 3-6 month period

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