

A Board Game Tonight? Sure!

by Carey Clark

from *Faith Today*, November/December 2006

They're the old party standbys--board games like *Mad Gab*, *Blurt* and *TriBond*. But in recent years, they've also become Christian. And Bible editions of board games have steadily grown into best-sellers in Canada.

Brent Hackett of Forerunner Marketing in Cambridge, Ontario, says "Christianized games" are popular because Canadians already know the rules and are ready to play. "If you've already played any of these games, you can bring them home, open the box, pull the stuff out and start playing."

Sales of Bible edition games at Hackett's company grow at a rate of eight to 10 percent each year.

Rob Anderson is president of Cactus Game Design and manufactures the bible editions of *Outburst*, *Scattergories* and *Guesstures*. "We feel in some small part we're doing the Lord's work. There's a real need for morally positive, uplifting family games."

The company licenses secular versions from companies like Hasbro and Mattel, and redesigns them, adding biblical content.

Hackett says there's no danger of trivializing spiritual truth. He argues that Bible editions of popular games make the Christian message more accessible. *Solomon's Temple*, a strategy game, is based on actual historical events, recorded in the Bible. Players try to "build and furnish" Solomon's temple while fighting off invading Babylonian armies wielded by the 12-year-old sitting across the table from them.

"My experience is there are not too many 12-year-old boys picking up their Bibles and reading them consistently. Let's be honest, their parents aren't doing that either," says Anderson. He believes games like *Solomon's Temple* nurture interest in the Bible while making for a fun night at home.

Another strategy game, *Settlers of Canaan*, reworks the best-selling *Settlers of Catan*.

What's next? A Bible version of the popular word association game *Apples to Apples*, due in October.

