

Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc.

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More Christians Than People? - The Power of Multiplying Disciples

by Dan Trygg

God's plan for displacing the dominion of Satan with the Kingdom of God relies on the same principles we see in nature for the rapid reproduction and spread of any species. God's plan is designed around multiplication. Paul describes this in II Timothy 2:2, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful people who will be able to teach others also." This represents four generations, ...Paul, Timothy, "faithful people" and "others". This is the method Paul used in his attempt to carry out the great commission of Matthew 28:19,20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." **The key to this strategy is quality.** There must be complete commitment to learn to do all that Jesus said, and a clear commitment to pass along this challenge to other faithful people, who will commit to passing it along to others. **Without this follow through, the multiplied effect is lost.** With this follow through, however, it is possible to spread across and win the world in a relatively short amount of time. The key is multiplication, instead of addition. If we only "add to the church", we are still falling behind the world population, which is multiplying. **ONLY BY MULTIPLICATION can we effectively catch up and hope to overtake the burgeoning growth and expansion of the human race.**

To illustrate the power of multiplication versus addition, I have listed below by year in the left hand column what would happen if someone were to meet with one other person for a year, to teach and train them, and then, in each following year, each would pick another person to train and disciple. In the right hand column, I list what would happen if you were to lead 1,000 people a day to the Lord. That is an extremely large number, but it is used for illustration purposes. If each year you continued at that same rate, how would that compare over time with the multiplication method. The multiplication method demands quality, because the new person must become ready to work with someone else in a year, while the addition method demands no such quality. These are simply new converts. Let's see what happens:

Year	Number of Multiplying Disciples	Total Number of Converts @ 1,000/day	
1	2	365,000	
2	4	730,000	
3	8	1,095,000	
4	16	1,460,000	
5	32	1,825,000	
6	64	2,190,000	
7	128	2,555,000	
8	256	2,920,000	
9	512	3,285,000	
10	1,032	3,650,000	
11	2,064	4,015,000	
12	4,128	4,380,000	
13	8,256	4,745,000	
14	16,512	5,110,000	
15	33,024	5,475,000	
16	66,048	5,840,000	
17	132,096	6,205,000	
18	264,192	6,570,000	
19	528,384	6,935,000	
20	1,056,768	7,300,000	
21	2,113,536	7,665,000	
22	4,227,072	8,030,000	
23	8,454,144	8,395,000	
24	16,908,288	8,760,000	
25	33,816,576	9,125,000	
26	67,633,152	9,490,000	
27	135,266,304	9,855,000	
28	270,532,608	10,220,000	
29	541,066,216	10,585,000	
30	1,082,130,432	10,950,000	
31	2,164,260,864	11,315,000	
32	4,328,521,728	11,680,000	
33	8,650,043,456	12,045,000	

Note how much more quickly the numbers seem to add up in the "ministry by addition" column. It seems like hardly anything is happening at all in the multiplying discipleship column. The apparent lack of visible results can cause disciplers to be discouraged, and tempt them to give up to join the movement that seems to be getting more results.

There have been few, if any, ministries that have won 1,000 people a day to Christ consistently. If there *were* such a ministry, how many of these converts would grow to maturity? The discipling model *requires* that those involved grow up and mature enough to lead and work with others.

In our illustration, it would take 23 years to "catch up" with the converts from the "addition model", but in 10 more years multiplying disciples could reach the world, while the other method *never* could.

The keys to success are clear vision, a strong commitment, perseverance and not abandoning the Biblical plan for multiplying disciples.