

difference and wanted to find out about it. So my friend asked him some questions that had to do with Bible reading, study, memory, and prayer. He had shown a keen interest in doing these things, so my friend had begun to share with him on a regular basis the things he had learned from me and which I had learned from Scotty.

Meanwhile, a Christian student had come up to me on the University of Washington campus . . . and so it goes. For many years now I have been involved in helping others personally in their Christian lives. I've watched the interest pastors, missionaries, dedicated laymen, college and seminary students, and servicemen have shown in helping others individually as well. Today a growing groundswell of interest in multiplying disciples is to be seen in many churches and by many people.

To Multiply or Not to Multiply—That Is the Question

Some years ago I was talking to a zealous young Christian. "Bob," I asked, "what's the thing that brings you more joy than anything else in life?"

"Man, LeRoy, that's easy," he replied. "Leading someone to Christ."

I agreed with him. Everybody is happy when that happens—you are happy, the new convert is happy, there is joy in heaven. "But," I told Bob, "there is something even greater than that."

He was puzzled. What could possibly be greater than seeing a person come to Christ?

I continued, "When the person you have led to Christ grows and develops into a dedicated, fruitful, mature disciple who then goes on to lead others to Christ and help them in turn as well."

"Say!" he exclaimed, "I've never thought of that!"

Frankly, it is no surprise that he hadn't heard or thought of that. In those days the idea was pretty obscure, but he was willing to take the time to learn, and he did. Today there are many mature, committed, fruitful disciples on two continents because of the impact of Bob's life and his vision of multiplying disciples.

On the other hand, a lack of knowledge of these things can

have sad consequences. I was visiting a foreign mission field and spoke with a veteran missionary. He told me a story that still haunts me; I can't get it out of my mind. It seems that he went overseas some fifteen years before we met and began the usual programs. About the time he arrived on his field, he met a young man named Johnny, who was involved in something quite different.

Johnny was a committed disciple of Jesus Christ, but he was going about his ministry in all the wrong ways according to the "book." In contrast to the typical missionary approach of the time, Johnny was spending the bulk of his time meeting with a few young men in that country. The veteran missionary tried to get Johnny straightened out, but the young man kept on with his "different" approach. The years passed, and the veteran missionary now had to leave the country of his service due to new visa restrictions.

As he sat across the coffee table from me in his home, he told me, "LeRoy, I've got little to show for my time there. Oh, there is a group of people who meet in our assembly, but I wonder what will happen to them when I leave. They are not disciples. They have been faithful in listening to my sermons, but they do not witness. Few of them know how to lead another person to Christ. They know nothing about discipling others. And now that I am leaving, I can see I've all but wasted my time here."

He continued, "Then I look at what has come out of Johnny's life. One of the men he worked with is now a professor at the university. This man is mightily used of God to reach and train scores of university students. Another is leading a witnessing and discipling team of about forty young men and women. Another is in a nearby city with a group of thirty-five growing disciples around him. Three have gone to other countries as missionaries and are now leading teams in those lands who are multiplying disciples. God is blessing their work."

"I see the contrast between my life and his and it is tragic. I was so sure I was right. What he was doing seemed so insignificant, but now I look at the results and they are staggering." It was a sad meeting for both of us.

On another occasion I was speaking at a weekend conference in the Midwest. A pastor who had spent the bulk of

