



REACH MORE STUDENTS BY SOWING BROADLY

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If you want to have a ministry that is consistently growing and reaching new people you will need to sow broadly with the good works and good news of Jesus.

The Example of Jesus

Jesus started his ministry by sowing broadly with loving service and preaching the gospel of the kingdom to thousands of people. In Mark 1 the whole city of Capernaum was gathered around Jesus as he healed people and ministered to their needs. He could have launched the first mega-church that day but he knew there was still a lot of gospel seed to be sown in other places first.

"Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons." Mark 1:36-39, NIV

Jesus saturated his target areas with good works and good news. This method of sowing broadly laid the foundation for the first Church. This was also how he trained his disciples as they sowed broadly "with him." (Mark 3:14, NIV) In Luke 10 Jesus sent out 72 of his disciples two by two into "every town and place where he was about to go." He instructed them to sow broadly by looking for "people of peace" who could open up doors to reach whole communities.

Jesus focused his leadership training on the 12 apostles but modeled to them a method of ministry that reached thousands of people with good works and good news. At times Jesus preached to crowds of 10,000-15,000! The fact that Jesus did ministry like this should have profound implications on our own outreach strategies. Mark 6 shows a powerful example of how Jesus modeled sowing broadly to his disciples.

"Then because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things." Mark 6:30-34, NIV

Jesus trained his disciples in the context of abundant evangelism. The training Jesus gave his disciples looked a lot more like "let me train you how to reach all these people" rather than "lets meet once a week, read and memorize the Bible and pray." As we can see this training included working so hard that they didn't even have time to eat! (Mark 6:31, NIV) Even when Jesus was trying to get away from the crowds he taught



them a valuable lesson to have compassion for the crowd even when they legitimately needed rest. One of the primary discipleship training tools Jesus used was showing them how to sow broadly to as many people as possible.

The Example of the Early Church

Towards the end of his time on earth Jesus commissioned his disciples to carry on the same ministry he was doing with them. "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (John 20:21, NIV) After being filled with the Holy Spirit these disciples broadly and boldly spread the gospel across the known world. The early disciples were not careful with who and how they shared the good news but shared with all who would listen. "Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ." (Acts 5:42, NIV) As a result the gospel went viral as the apostles modeled this radical urgency to get the word out. People couldn't help share about the man who rose from the dead. "For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20, NIV) This broad sowing of the gospel was the start of an unstoppable movement that "turned the world upside down" in one generation. (Acts 17:6, NIV)

The Example of Modern Movements

Every revival and movement in the history of Christianity has been marked by an abundant zeal to spread the good news to all who will listen. The potential of the Church is unleashed when every member has the opportunity to be equipped to share God's love with every person they get an opportunity to share with. I have yet to see a growing Church or ministry that doesn't broadly sow the gospel.

David Garrison in his excellent book on "Church Planting Movements" listed 10 things that were evident in every CPM. The second thing on his list was "Abundant Evangelism." In his book Dave tells story after story of how God is using abundant sharing of the gospel to catalyze movements. Steve Smith shares similar findings in the book "T4T" on the fastest and largest church planting movement in the history of Christianity. The "T4T" movement recorded 1.7 million baptisms and 150,000 new churches since 2001. This movement started with just one missionary and his wife. Check out this selection from "T4T":

We must use spiritual means to find spiritual people. One successful trainer says it this way. "We must sift for persons of peace using the gospel." In a training session, it became apparent that a long-time colleague and his team were seeing dramatic results in a very "resistant" people group. For seven years, they had labored with no fruit – no new believers and no churches. How discouraging! At our meeting, he reported that in the eighth year they began to see radically different results. So I asked him "what changed?" In embarrassment he replied, "We started sharing the gospel." I said, "Excuse me? What did you say?" Looking me in the eyes with sadness he said more loudly "We started sharing the gospel!" Another colleague who was seeing a lot of people come to Christ was asked "Whom do you find to be the most responsive?" He replied "Those that I share the gospel with. 100% of the those I do not share with do not respond."



It Works on Campus!

Sowing broadly has helped us create a culture of evangelistic urgency that God is using. Just this school year over 63 students have indicated decisions to accept Jesus and follow him as Lord! Even our new believers don't know any better than to share Jesus with their lost friends and family. We have seen several guys lead their girlfriends to Jesus. One guy led his girlfriend to Christ in the hot tub! They don't train you to do that in the evangelism books! Another new believer invited her father to her baptism. Her Dad accepted Jesus before the baptism and got dunked along with her! One day on campus this fall we saw 6 students pray to receive Jesus at different [gospel appointments](#). At times it really has feels like Acts 2:47 "*And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved,*" (NIV). It is my prayer that our students won't realize that this is not normal.

You Reap in Proportion to What You Sow

I have been a city boy all my life but I understand some basic principles of farming. One obvious truth is that you reap in proportion to the amount that you sow. Please read these familiar scriptures and be sensitive to what the Spirit is saying to you.

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." 2 Corinthians 9:6, NIV

"Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well." Ecclesiastes 11:6, NIV

"Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." John 4:35, NIV

"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" Matthew 9:35-37, NIV

Don't worry if you don't see overwhelming results right away. You never know what God wants to do through your obedience. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Galatians 6:9, NIV)

How many students on your campus will hear the gospel today?



Questions for Reflection

- What would potentially hold you back from leading yourself and your ministry to sow broadly with the gospel?
- What are some practical ways you could apply this principle to your ministry?
- What are some effective tools that you could use to train your leaders and students to share Christ?