

A Problem with Multiplication

BY **GREG PARSONS**
DIRECTOR OF
GLOBAL CONNECTIONS
FRONTIER VENTURES

At its core, the New Testament is clear that multiplication of faith is expected:

- In Matthew 13:8, in the Parable of the Sower, Jesus said, "...others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty." He explained in verse 23 that this seed landed on, "...the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty." (NASB)

That is serious multiplication!

- In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul wrote to his disciple Timothy, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (NASB) That is five generations—if you start with Jesus!

As you get older, you think more about who will carry on your family and ministry. Because of that, I increasingly engage and invest my life in the next generation—both those in ministry and my children and grandchildren (I will show you pictures!). And, as I attend events around the globe, I continue to purposefully invest time with leaders.

It also makes you consider those who invested in your life. Recently, I was thinking about the men and women who have invested in and greatly influenced my life.¹ If I go back to

my formative years there were many, but one key person was a teaching pastor named **Bill Lawrence**. I met Bill when I was just entering 9th grade. He had recently started a church that our family began attending just after it moved to a rented facility. Bill's faithful, deep teaching and love for God and His Word captured my heart, changed my life and gave me direction.

Many other men and women helped shape my walk with Christ—I can think of many who are still in full-time ministry—not to mention hundreds of others who are involved in ministry as faithful moms, dads and singles serving wherever the Lord has led them.

But, let me back up to those who influenced Bill. I don't know who he would list, but he came to start that church because another church 30 miles away had a vision for church planting. The first pastor of that "mother" church was **Ray Stedman**. He started there in 1950, just after serving with **Harry A. Ironside**, famous Bible teacher and commentator. Stedman also worked with **J Vernon McGee** of the *Thru the Bible* radio program.²

One of the things Stedman did early in his 40 years of ministry was to start a training program for younger men going into ministry.³ Bill Lawrence was one of the interns, but the first two were **Chuck Swindoll** (pastor and very popular radio Bible teacher) and **Luis Palau**⁴ (a crusade

evangelist from Argentina—it is estimated that as of 2007, he had spoken to 25 million people in 70 nations in English and Spanish).

Pretty impressive little internship program! Of course, there are all kinds of people impacted by all those involved that I don't know—thousands upon thousands by now.

But there is a problem with multiplication.

Faithful multiplication, mainly in one culture, excludes the Unreached People Groups (UPG) of the world. Yes, we are thankful for those who have believed among the Unreached. A growing number have movements as we have reported in *MF*. But the inherent problem within UPGs is that until believers go cross-culturally to serve, that multiplication process usually doesn't get started.⁵ No national believer is there yet, and often, no nearby culture has a solid church either. That is why we have always talked about the need for initial penetration into an unreached group. That is the *unique missionary task* of crossing a culture and (usually) language divide. That is what Jesus followers must seek. It is what we pray for. We want to see Gospel/Jesus centered movements multiply within those UPGs without a witness in their culture. So, we pray and work to that end.

And these are the stories I'm helping to tell in podcasts now. The first podcast was posted on February 11, 2019 at: www.frontierventures.org/blog. We'd love to hear your story: who influenced you and what are you doing about it? 

⁵ There are some amazing exceptions, where new believers are crossing cultures early in their faith journey.

them as you are able. I've highlighted the names that will help you see some of the generational influence.

² You can learn more about Stedman at www.raystedman.org.

³ It was later called Scribes School.

⁴ Pray for him, he has cancer and seems to be doing well, last I heard.

¹ I am sorry if some of our international readers do not know these people. I encourage you to learn more about