



# PASSIONATE CALL *for* MATURITY THAT REPRODUCES

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Dawson Trotman

## A distillation of Trotman's message "Born to Reproduce"

Navigator founder Dawson Trotman (Daws, 1906–1956) trained a young Navy Christian to win others. That sailor disciplined another, and God used these two sailors plus three others under Daws' influence to bring Jim Downing to Himself. (See Jim's interview on p. 17.) At one point Navigators were ministering on 1,000 U.S. naval ships and stations. Billy Graham said, "I think Daws has personally touched more lives than anybody I have ever known."

In 1956, shortly before he drowned saving someone else, Daws gave a powerful message detailing his discipleship insights. This message influenced discipleship strategy around the world, and epitomizes the Navigator ministry in particular. Jim Downing reordered Daws' original message into a written form, which is condensed below. Daws' full audio presentation and Jim's written restructuring of it are both worthy of review and reflection by any serious follower of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

### God Desires Multiplication

**G**od told Adam and Eve, our first parents: "Multiply. I want more just like you, more in my own image." A person is born again when he receives Jesus Christ. It is God's plan that these new babes in Christ grow. All provision is made for their growth into maturity, and then they are to multiply—not only the rich or the educated, but all alike. Every person born into God's family is to multiply.

Soul winners are not soul winners because of what they know, but because of the Person they know, how well they know Him, and how much they long for others to know Him.

### Infants Need Parents

After leading someone to Christ, I used to leave him with Philippians 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Then I came across one such fellow a year later and found no evidence of the new birth. I began to go find some of my "converts" and became sick at heart.

This led to fewer converts but more time with the converts. Soon I could say with Paul,

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now (Phil. 1:3–5).

### Biblical Emphasis on Follow-Up

Paul was a busy evangelist, but the New Testament is largely made up of his follow-up letters to the converts. All the writings of Peter, Paul, James and most of John's are food for the new Christian.

Nothing under heaven can keep one newly born-again from going on with the Lord *if he has a spiritual parent* to care for him and give him the spiritual food God has provided for his normal growth. When things are right between you and the Lord, regardless of how much or how little you may know intellectually from the standpoint of the world, *you can be a spiritual parent*, even when you are very young in the Lord.

### The Potential and Pitfall of Multiplication

Suppose someone desires to be a spiritual father. He asks God to give him a man to teach. As he teaches this first man, they each start praying for another man. By the end of six months, each starts teaching another. At the end of the year, they are just four. Each may also teach a Bible class or help in a street meeting, but their main concern is their man and how he is doing. They encourage one another "let's not let anything sidetrack us. Let's give the Gospel out to a lot of people, but let's see at least one man through."

At the end of two years there are 16 men. At the end of five there are 1,024. After fifteen and a half years there are more than two billion, the present world population of over three years old.

But wait! Suppose the first man trained gets side-tracked, washes out and does not produce his first man. Fifteen and one-half years later you can cut your two billion down to one billion because the devil caused B to be sterile.

### How Spiritual Parenting Works

Twenty-three years ago we taught a born-again sailor how to reproduce spiritually. We spent time together and took care of his problems. We taught him not only to hear God's Word and read it, but how to study it. We taught him how to fill the quiver of his heart with the arrows of God's Word, so the Spirit of God could lift God's word to the bow of his lips and pierce a heart for Christ.

He approached a number of boys on his ship, but none would go all out for the Lord. They would go to church, but when it came to doing something, they were "also rans." He came to me after a month and said, "Dawson, I can't get any of these guys on the ship to get down to business."

I told him, "Ask God to give you one. You can't have two until you have one. Ask God to give you a man after your own heart." He began to pray.

Soon he said to me, "I think I've found him." Those two began to grow and spiritually reproduce. On that ship 125 men found the Saviour before it was sunk at Pearl Harbor. Men off that first battleship are in four continents of the world as missionaries today.

The devil's great trick is to stop anything like this if he can before it gets started.

### The Importance of a Victorious Spiritual Life

When interviewing missionary candidates I ask "How is your devotional life? Do you feel it is what the Lord would have it to be?"

In one group of 29 only one person said, "I believe my devotional life is what it ought to be." The others excused their devotional life on the basis of temporary busyness, but as we looked back they had never had consistent victory.

Then I asked "How many have you won to Christ who are living for Him today?" The majority had to admit that they were ready to cross an ocean and learn a foreign language, but they had not won their first soul who was going on with Jesus Christ.

One reason for sterility is lack of communion with Christ.

These questions do not apply to missionaries and prospective missionaries only. They apply to all of God's people. Every one of His children ought to be a reproducer.

### Scripture Memory is Essential

Load your heart with this precious Seed. God will then direct you to those whom you can lead to Christ. There are many hearts ready for the Gospel now.

In the early days, whenever sailors were with us for supper, I would say

Quote a verse you have learned in the last 48 hours if you have one. Otherwise just give us a verse.

### Five Reasons Christians Do Not Reproduce

#### 1. Unconfessed Sin

Impairment to some essential organ can prevent physical reproduction. In the spiritual realm sin is the disease that can keep one from winning the lost.

#### 2. Fear of Man

"Oh, but I am afraid" someone says. "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25).

#### 3. Lack of Spiritual Purpose

Some Christians desire to be spiritual parents, but their lives run in circles:

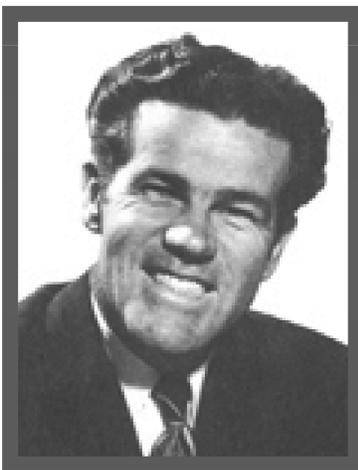
I have to buy a house or pay the rent so I will have a place to rest up, so I will be fit to work and earn some more money.

#### 4. Busyness in Religious Activity

Satan puts his efforts into getting the Christian busy, but not producing. I am not talking about earning money, but being busy doing Christian things. We have spiritual activity with little productivity.

#### 5. Faithfulness in Church but not in Reproducing

We have a lot of pew-sitters—people think that if they are faithful in church attendance, put good-sized gifts into the offering plate, get people to come, and serve in some way they have done their part. All this is incidental to the supreme task of winning a man or woman to Jesus Christ and then helping him or her to go on. 🌐



Dawson Trotman

<sup>1</sup> Visit [MissionFrontiers.org](http://MissionFrontiers.org) for links to the originals.