

Purpose: To connect with those who have an active relationship with Church Doctor Ministries as peers in ministry, clients, and partners in prayer and support.

The Church Doctor® Report provides a quick read of strategic and influential information. This information is free to share as long as the source is respected: *The Church Doctor® Report*, www.churchdoctor.org. (To sign up: email johnwargowsky@churchdoctor.org)

Do the Math: How Your Church Can Reach Thousands

“Really?” replied Scott. “My little church reach thousands? Are you kidding? Our church has been around for sixty years, and...total...I bet we’ve had about five to six hundred people. I mean, over the years.”

“I know,” I replied. “But you could have reached thousands with the gospel.”

“You’re dreaming,” Scott shook his head in disbelief. “Look how small our church is, ninety members, maybe ninety-five. Most of those are over sixty years old. Our facility needs fixing. Our budget is stretched. Reach thousands? That’s preposterous!”

The Parable of the Corn Cob

I reached into my briefcase and what I pulled out got Scott’s attention. It was a cob of corn. “Scott, this is a cob of corn. It’s a symbol of the way God operates on every level, every time. You plant one kernel of corn. And it grows into a stalk. On that stalk there is at least one ear of corn, often two. Sometimes there are three. I know, because I planted this kernel of corn.”

Scott looked at me and contemplated a joke about being “corny” but passed, thinking it was so stupid.

“Guess how many kernels of corn are on this one cob of corn?” I asked.

“You mean you counted them?” Scott asked.



Kent Hunter, Founder of Church Doctor Ministries, is the architect of the *Healthy Churches Thrive!* spiritual adventure that God uses for spiritual breakthrough in congregations. Hunter says he is motivated by the challenge and the joy of helping Christians and churches become more effective in reaching the world for Jesus Christ. “Discipling, like raising kids, is the toughest work—and most rewarding. Working for, and with, the King of the universe is energizing.”

www.churchdoctor.org

Email Kent: kenthunter@churchdoctor.org

MULTIPLYING MINISTRY

- ▶ The *Church Doctor® Report* is provided at no cost. Forward it to those in your network of influence and add value to their lives!
- ▶ Forward it to staff and leaders in your church, denomination, network, or fellowship.

“Actually, I did. Well, I counted the number of kernels in a row and multiplied the rows. The answer? From one kernel of corn, not counting the other ears on the same stalk, this cob of corn has six hundred and twelve kernels.”

Scott was amazed, and I had his attention. I hope I have yours, too.

“That is multiplication. Think about it, Scott. Everything God does is multiplication. Or, to be more accurate, in everything God does, He *intends* multiplication.”

A Swiss professor once calculated that if nothing hindered a single grain of wheat, in only eight years it would sufficiently multiply to feed all the inhabitants of earth for a year. If there were no bugs to eat the grain of wheat, if there was no bad weather, no drought, no hindrance whatsoever, one grain of wheat would feed everyone on earth for a year. This is the way God works.

Neil Cole once shared this with me over lunch: “God is all about multiplication. The church, is occasionally good at addition. We are very good, however, at subtraction. Sometimes, we’re excellent at division!”

Multiplication is God’s plan for the church. However, most churches, if they grow at all, grow by addition. And we celebrate that, even though it is far below God’s best plan. If we don’t get this right, we don’t get God’s plan for our churches. To be specific: the devil’s strategy is to divide and conquer. The Lord’s strategy is to divide and multiply.

Doing the Math, Making Disciples

When I ask church leaders about how their church is making disciples, they talk about preaching, teaching Bible classes, and Sunday school. However, these are not ministries that *make* disciples. They are very important ministries that provide part of the process of *growing* Christians.

You can’t mass produce disciples. Making disciples is a one-on-one relational process. Making disciples is more like raising children than teaching a class.

Not to be mean, but to make a point, let me ask you, “Who are you discipling right now?” Who are you pouring your life into, as a mature Christian, raising up a child of God? Who are you focusing your time on? If you can’t name anyone, then you may be doing a great job at sharing the faith, teaching others about the Bible, but you may not be multiplying. Why is that so important?

In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus tells a story about some servants who were given a piece of the king’s property to manage. This story, in older translations of the Bible, speaks about a man who was given five “talents,” another given two “talents,” and another man given one “talent.” You can think of this as different amounts of money or responsibility. You can also think of this and consider it to be your church, your life, your time, the use of your gifts, your energy. All of it belongs to God, and each is a

TEN WAYS TO MULTIPLY

1. Change your worldview—get a corn cob for your desk, or the dashboard of your car, if necessary.
2. Learn all you can from Scripture about the priesthood of believers.
3. If you are a parent, translate your approach into raising spiritual children.
4. Resist the temptation to reach your unchurched friend by inviting her to church. Over coffee, share what God means to you. Make it your ministry.
5. If you are involved in a ministry, never do it alone. Relationally equip others.
6. Sketch out the potential of your church. Do the math: ask everyone to list the unchurched people in their social networks. The total is the “low hanging fruit” of the harvest potential of your congregation.
7. Encourage your church leaders to model multiplication—all the time.
8. Pray that God will give you someone to nurture in the faith.
9. Translate multiplication to every aspect of church: multiply worship services, times, styles, venues, outreach strategies—multiply your church by planting another.
10. When you disciple another person, don’t quit until they are a discipler.

piece of His Kingdom.

Each of the servants was to manage a piece of the property for the King until He returns. You are likely familiar with the story. The person who had five talents *multiplied* what he had. The one who had less responsibility, two talents, *multiplied* also. However, the person who had even less responsibility, one talent, dug a hole and hid the Master's money.

When the King—in this story, the Master, Jesus—returned, he told the multipliers, “Well done good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of your Master.”

The Master then learned about the one who had hid the money, who did not *multiply*. He had some harsh words: He called him “wicked and lazy...a worthless servant.”

Someday, you will leave this earth and be with Jesus. You will be with Jesus because you believed in Him as your Savior. This is the sure promise of eternal life. But when you get there, would you like to hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant”?

On what basis will He say that? I'm pretty sure it won't be how many church meetings you attended. It's quite certain it won't be how many sermons you preached, worship services you attended, or classes you taught. It's very likely it won't be based on how much money you gave back to God.

One Mission

Jesus has given you one mission: to make disciples. Discipleship is the multiplication of ourselves. As a Christian, how many times have you multiplied yourself, spiritually? Who is your disciple right now?

You can't disciple twenty-five people at once. Jesus, the Son of God, limited His primary group to twelve, and that was His full-time work. Even then, one of them didn't make it. So who is your “spiritual project” right now?

There are two types of discipling in the New Testament. One is the discipleship process of reaching a non-Christian who becomes a baby Christian, and, through nurturing, matures into a spiritual young adult. This is the commission given in Matthew 18:19-20, multiplying to make disciples.

The second approach to making disciples is equipping a Christian for the work of ministry. This is done in a one-on-one relationship by modeling, mentoring, apprenticing, and growing that person into Christian ministry. This is reflected in Ephesians 4:11-16, which is all about building the body of Christ, the church.

Discipling is a personal, one-on-one, long-term relationship. It includes baptizing and teaching. But it is a relational, personal process. This is the way Scripture describes it. It is the way Jesus modeled it. It is what the early church demonstrated.

When it happens, churches grow and Christianity explodes exponentially. The Christian movement is designed to be caught, relationally, one person to another.

Why Every Church Leader Should Study Epidemiology

Epidemiology is the study of epidemics. Jesus, the genius that started the Christian movement, focused entirely on an epidemic form of a movement. The Christian movement is intended to grow by multiplication, like a Jesus epidemic. You catch it like people catch the flu. You share it in an up-close-and-personal way of multiplication.

You don't get the flu by reading a book about the flu. You don't catch the flu by hearing a lecture about the flu. You catch the flu by being up close and personal with someone who has it. Are you a contagious Christian? Christianity is much more than an academic exercise where someone dictates

content to someone else.

Movements reach critical mass, and at that tipping point, they explode. This is called geometric progression. It is just like an epidemic.

Malcolm Gladwell in his book *The Tipping Point*, demonstrates the power of multiplication by geometric progression. Take a single piece of paper and fold it over one time. Then fold it again and again and again. Let's say it's a very large piece of paper so that you can fold it over fifty times. Once you have multiplied that single piece of paper and folded it over fifty times in exponential expansion, how tall do you think that piece of paper would be? After folding a single sheet of paper fifty times, would it be three feet tall? As tall as a refrigerator? As tall as an oak tree?

If you are a student of epidemiology, or a student of farming, or a student of how the church is supposed to grow, the answer will not surprise you. If you fold a single sheet of paper again and again over fifty times, it would reach from the earth to the sun! And, if you folded it over one more time, it would reach to the sun and back.

Before you say, "That could never happen in my church, in our city, in this country," remember that this is exactly what happened in the early church. The Mediterranean world was turned upside down. It also has happened in many places around the world. It is occurring today in Ethiopia, parts of Nigeria, a portion of South Africa, Argentina, and Communist China, just to mention a few places. It is also happening in some churches in the U.S. and Europe, today. The word that missiologists use for this multiplication is a revival.

Christians have been lulled into the concept that a revival is an *extraordinary* act of God that is, in the words of some, "almost beyond belief." In truth, according to the Scripture, this is *normal*. Exponential, explosive growth of the Kingdom of God is the way it's supposed to occur. Revival is not the exception. Churches plodding along at addition are the exception.

Holy DNA

The DNA of God is designed for multiplication. In Genesis 1:22, God said people are supposed to fill the earth. His mathematical approach you know: "Be fruitful and multiply...." If you know anything about demographics and history, this is exactly what has happened. God's math works. That's God's plan for filling the planet with people.

God's plan to fill heaven is absolutely and entirely the same approach. Jesus could have said "be fruitful and multiply the faith." His words were, "Go, make disciples," Matthew 28:19-20. Just so that we would get it, Jesus modeled this, and His ministry went from one to twelve, in the leadership group, and many more that were in the next circle of followers. This Jesus epidemic continued in the power of Pentecost, and the church grew from twelve to 120 then to 3,000 and then to 5,000 in a relatively short period of time. Before long the New Testament talks about "multitudes," even before you get very deep into the book of Acts. You may recognize that the word "multitude" is related to the word "multiplication." Soon after that, the church exploded even further as Christian communities, called congregations or churches, were multiplied across the Mediterranean world.

KEY RESOURCES

Brodeur, Michael, and Banning Liebscher. *Revival Culture: Prepare for the Next Great Awakening*. Ventura: Chosen Books, 2013.

Chan, Francis, David Platt, and Mark Beuving. *Multiply*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2012.

Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. New York City: Back Bay Books, 2002.

Hays, Jo N. *Epidemics and Pandemics: Their Impacts on Human History*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005.

Hunter, Kent R. *Move Your Church To Action*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.

Putman, Jim. *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2010.

Spader, Dann L. *4 Chair Discipling: Growing a Movement of Disciple-Makers*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014.

Where We Get This Wrong

This week, millions of Christians will have a conversation with someone in their social network. This will be someone with whom they have a relationship. It might be a neighbor. It could be someone where they work or go to school. It could be a relative. It could be a conversation with a waiter, a clerk at the grocery store, the woman at the checkout in the pharmacy. And, instead of pursuing a discipling opportunity, they will discuss sports, weather, the latest bad news on television, and thousands of other topics without ever recognizing that they are called as a disciple to begin, very delicately, the process of introducing another person to Christ.

If they are what many church leaders consider to be “an extraordinary Christian” with a “mission heart” they will try to invite them to church. They think, “If I just get them into the building, then the pastor will preach and teach them and they will participate in programs and the institution will disciple them.” Addition, not multiplication!

What about ministry multiplication? Today, hundreds of thousands of pastors will visit someone in the hospital, and take no one with them who they are discipling, multiplying, for hospital ministry. They have forgotten the simple invitation, “Come follow me,” which Jesus demonstrated.

If we continue to believe the organizational level of the church is the way to grow the movement, Christianity will remain stalled. If Christians continue to perpetuate the unbiblical concept that it’s the job of the church staff to bring people to Christ and disciple them through classes, the movement will remain stalled. If church leaders continue to be elected to positions and leaders do not disciple future leaders, the movement will remain stalled.

The Movement Begins With You

The exponential expansion of Christianity is an inside job with every Christian. If it’s going to happen, it absolutely must be modeled by every church leader. If leaders don’t multiply, don’t expect anyone else in the church to get it. This multiplication is a DNA issue. It is caught not taught. It begins with you, personally.

It is likely at the end of your time on this earth – when you go into the presence of Jesus – you would *really* like to hear the words, “Well done good and faithful servant.” It is also likely that you would like to see those in your social network, who don’t yet follow Jesus, come to saving faith. It is also likely that you would love to see your church bursting at the seams, no room for all the people. It is quite possible that you would like to see the challenges for your church move from tight budgets and arguments about the color of the new carpet to real challenges – like where do we put all the people?

How will you measure your effectiveness for God? *Success* is when you have achieved for yourself. *Significance* is when you have achieved for yourself and others. *Greatness* is when you have achieved for yourself and others, who achieve for others. The movement Jesus started is a spiritual epidemic.

Become a multiplier. Well done, good and faithful servant.

To schedule a phone appointment to discuss this topic further with Kent, call Terry Atz at 1-800-626-8515.



Church Doctor® Ministries
1230 U.S. Highway Six Corunna, IN 46730 USA (800) 626-8515
www.churchdoctor.org info@churchdoctor.org www.twitter.com/churchdoctor