

Laborers

Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers (laborers) are few” - Matthew 9:37; Luke 10:2. The harvest is made up of the “harassed and helpless” - Matthew 9:36. These are the “lost,” “separate from Christ, excluded.-foreigners... without hope and without God in the world” - Ephesians 2:12. Laborers are the crucial need. They are few. Historically, The Navigators have felt themselves called to help fill that need. We have put our focus on Laborers.

I. What is a Laborer?

A. The Greek word is “ergates.”

1. Of the 15 times this word is used in the New Testament, 11 relate to harvesting. So a laborer is involved in harvesting.

Definitions:

“A worker in the fields”. (Note 9)

“A workman, usually one who works for hire, an agricultural laborer”. (Note 10)

“The basic term means to work. Denotes action or active zeal in contrast to useless busyness. May be used for an agricultural worker. God’s work through men (not only through the organized Church)”. (Note 11)

2. The “ergates” kind of involvement is described in Matthew 10 where Jesus sent forth the 12 as laborers and in Luke 10 where He sent forth the 70 as laborers. Five significant facts apply to both missions:

- a. They were told to “Go” - they went on a brief trip.
- b. They were told to “Preach” - the Kingdom of God is near.
- c. They performed deeds - healed the sick, drove out demons.
- d. They were supported by the people to whom they went.
- e. They stayed and ministered only where they were welcome.

3. I Timothy 5:17,18 uses the word “ergates” in referring to elders who labor in the harvest: Preaching (evangelizing) and Teaching (establishing).

B. A companion Greek word “sunergos” means co-laborer or fellow worker.

This word is used of Priscilla and Aquila, Urbanus, Timothy, Titus, Epaphroditus, Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, Philemon, Demas and Luke.

It is used in 1 Corinthians 3:9.

“...laborers together with God” - KJV.

“...fellow workmen for God” - RSV.

“...God's fellow workers” - NIV.

C. A laborer is involved in:

- Planting and watering. 1 Corinthians 3:6
- Laying a foundation and building on the foundation. 1 Corinthians 3:10,11

D. Sowing and reaping is implied. John 4:35-38.

The word for harvest (therismos) in Matthew 9:36 is akin to the word for reap (therizo) in John 4:35 where Jesus speaks of bringing Samaritans to believe in Him.

E. From the above passages we find these kinds of Laborers:

- Sowers.
- Reapers, harvesters, foundation layers, preachers, personal evangelists.
- Builders, teachers, establishers, disciplers.

II. Definition: *A Laborer is a Disciple actively involved in the process of evangelizing the lost and/or establishing the saved.*

Multiplication and Reproduction

The laborers are FEW: Their numbers must be increased greatly. They must be multiplied.

Definition: To Multiply is to increase in number by natural generation (reproduction), or by splitting (as a cell), or by indefinite repetition of a process.

I. The following passages speak to the principle of spiritual multiplication.

A. II Timothy 2:2 - "Paul ...Timothy...faithful men ...others also."

Note: This Scripture does not teach one-to-one multiplication or even one-to-one reproduction. In fact, it implies both individual and group action. But it does teach reproduction in the sense of what might be called spiritual generations.

B. I Thessalonians:

1:6 - "You became followers of us and of the Lord" (production).

1:8 - "From you sounded out the Word of the Lord" (reproduction).

C. John 17:20 - "I...these...those who will believe through these"

D. Matthew 28:20 - "teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you."

E. John 12:24 - "a single seed. . . produces many seeds."

F. Isaiah 59:21 - "...thy mouth ...thy seed ...thy seeds' seed."

II. The ESSENCE of the Navigators ministry

Our ministry is not simply disciplemaking. It is multiplying the number of those who do the disciplemaking. It is third generation discipling, that is, REPRODUCTION.

A Navigator ministry that does not do this is dead-ended, limited only to what the Navigator can himself do.

When a person has produced disciples, he has reproduced himself as a disciple. He has become a laborer. But, when a person has raised up a laborer, he has both reproduced more disciples and himself as a laborer. This kind of reproduction multiplies both the disciples and the laborers.

Equippers

In order to multiply disciples and laborers, someone must equip disciples to become laborers.

I. What is an Equipper?

There is a category of specially gifted persons in the Bible who might be called equippers. Their function was to labor and to equip others to labor - Ephesians 4:11,12 and 2 Timothy 2:2.

They were the primary movers and motivators. They not only did the work of the ministry; they got others to do it. They were responsible for both. They were laborers who got others to labor.

Generally, their emergence was no accident. They were gifted by the Holy Spirit and selected and trained for specific ministry -Mark 3:14 (the Twelve) with John 17:20; Acts 16:1-3 (Timothy) with 2 Timothy 3:10 to 4:5.

Timothy is a good model. Paul said to Timothy - “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” - 2 Timothy 2:2. The transmission of truth was not to be left to chance, but only to a certain kind of men:

A. “Reliable” - with proven loyalty to the truth.

B. “Qualified to teach others” - with an aptitude to teach.

- It was Timothy's job to find and activate these persons. He was to be an equipper.
- It is through the equipper that reproduction and multiplication take place.

II. Definition: *An Equipper is a Laborer actively involved in the process of equipping Disciples to become Laborers.*

**In The Navigators, we have called Equippers by different names: reproducers, makers of disciplemakers (MDMs), leaders of disciplemakers (LDMs). We are here using the term “equippers” because of its biblical roots. Whatever the term, the concept is the same.*

Our Primary Aim

We have established our identity and defined the elements of our calling. This leads us to the obvious deduction that The Navigators have a particular job to do within God's redemptive plan. We are not called to do everything. Rather, we are to focus our efforts and resources on doing certain things. Exactly what are they? We have sharpened their definition down to a single statement; the statement of our Aim.

I. Statement:

*The Primary Aim of the Navigators
is to
Multiply Laborers in Every Nation
thus
Helping Fulfill Christ's Great Commission*

II. Explanation:

- A. "Aim" refers to our sphere of service within the Body. It defines what we are to do to be consistent with our calling.
- B. By "The Navigators" we refer to all those who have committed themselves to working together toward accomplishing this Aim.
- C. By "multiply" we mean to increase the number by continual repetition of the process of evangelizing, establishing and equipping. It includes the concept of reproduction to a third generation of both individual and group discipling ministries.
- D. By "laborer" we mean a disciple who is actively involved in the process of evangelizing the lost and/or establishing the saved.
- E. By "every nation" we mean those groups into which mankind gathers - such as Languages, Nationalities and Ethnic Groups.
- F. "To help fulfill" means that we recognize that Christ's Great Commission is given to the entire Body of Christ of which we are a part and to which we must relate ourselves and our fruit as harmoniously and usefully as possible.
- G. We understand "Christ's Great Commission" to include both spreading the good news of reconciliation through Christ and teaching the life of obedience to the Will of God as revealed in the Scriptures.