

I often considered the impact of my efforts in pursuit of my mission. I never dealt with very large groups in terms of numbers. But I felt rewarded in working with a small ministry; preaching or teaching to only a few was meaningful for me. I did not strive to be a leader of multitudes, but in humility realized that I must let the Lord lead me to the place He has set for me. Jesus Himself worked at first with a small crew in his ministry. Indeed, he had the greatest percentage of success with this small group.

When Jesus told us the parable of the sower¹, He was generally speaking of how the seed was scattered on all types of land – essentially all parts of the world. But as I thought of my own area of influence, I transcribed this analogy to the idea of a very small plot of land. It also had similar problems as those in the Teacher’s parable – but I put a great deal of effort to work the land by cultivating the soil. I removed rocks and thorns and dug deep to improve the character of the soil.

It was still difficult to make progress sometimes, though I certainly prayed for the “hundredfold” increase². I certainly loved the beautiful flowers that grow there with great variety, even though there weren’t that many. I was gratified to see that the flowers from my small parcel propagated into the surrounding areas. From my perspective, I was able to see large, productive farms in the area where great success was being accomplished. I could see barren, deserted areas as well. I did the best I could, concentrating on what God gave me to work with. I was glad to see the increase. And, of course, I knew that God was the one who was really responsible³ for the growth. And it is He that interprets the true success of the mission.

1. Matthew 13:1-23

2. Matthew 13:23

3. 1 Corinthians 3:6