

## Teaching to the Full

By Vernard T. Gant

*When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. (Matthew 14:13-20)*

Jesus instructed His followers to provide for the people what they needed for their wellbeing. They were faced with the daunting challenge of addressing the physical plight of the more than 5,000 people before them who were hungry and without food and in a deserted place. The disciples' response was to urge Jesus to send them to the towns and surrounding villages to find food. They realized that they did not have the capacity to address the needs of so many. The people needed help, but they had to go somewhere else to find it. The Lord, however, had a different solution which was not to send the hungry somewhere to be fed; rather, He said to them:

*you give them something to eat.*

Again, they had food but it was not enough to meet the needs. Had they simply distributed what they had it would have left the people in the same starving condition.

What the fish and bread meant for the thousands of hungry people standing before Christ and His disciples, an education means for the millions of American children who are educationally starving. Their teachers have the capacity to teach, but it is proving woefully inadequate. A natural response is to sympathetically look around for someone else to do something about it. Or, to place the blame for their condition on their parents, their schools, or their socio-economic circumstances—the "deserted" places in their lives. Ultimately, it's someone else's fault and therefore someone else's responsibility.

Listen carefully, however, to the words of Christ and I am convinced that given His heart of compassion that if He were looking out over the sea of children's faces He would instruct His followers, "Don't send them somewhere else to be educated—YOU EDUCATE THEM." God's people have an extraordinary capacity to take what is natural and produce supernatural results. ***The key is that the natural must first be offered to Christ for His blessing.*** That means that the teaching credentials, the lesson plans, the instructional materials, the curriculum must be given to Christ so that He gives it back to be distributed with His blessing. The order is most important:

- God's people receive what is natural
- God's people give the natural to Christ
- Christ blesses it
- Christ gives it back to His people
- God's people distribute it to those in need
- The people partake and are filled

Omitting any one of these steps short circuits the process. Many educators are attempting to feed educationally famished children but the children are not being filled. God's people, on the other hand, have the unique position as Christ followers to feed children to the full. It all hinges on His blessing. What He blesses satisfies to the full.