Martin Robinson in his recently published book Planting Mission-Shaped Churches Today makes the comment that “Mission always seeks to contextualize the gospel in relation to the culture that it seeks to address. That is not a difficult concept when we are thinking of the preparation of missionaries who are going to be sent to other lands” (13). Robinson continues on to make the point that the Church rarely approaches missionary preparation for the West with the same philosophy.

Such preparation, however, is greatly needed. Here the Church faces a post-Christianized environment that requires missionaries to exegete the cultures to which they are called. The ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic, and worldview differences are great, even in our backyard.

In this month’s newsletter, we see the realities of such diversity and the need for proper contextualization. We will travel to Maryland to meet a church planter. Mike Parker is serving among one of the wealthiest population segments in the United States. Also, we turn our attention to Toronto, known as a great city of enormous diversity. If you reach Toronto, you will reach many of the peoples of the world. Church planting among such cultures requires the rapid multiplication of New Testament congregations. We therefore conclude this newsletter with a review of Robert Logan’s book, Be Fruitful and Multiply: Embracing God’s Heart for Church Multiplication.

At this time of the year, autumn is upon us. In the next several weeks you will observe the changing colors of the leaves. During this time, remember the fact that North America is a continent of rapid change and a colorful diversity of peoples. May your observation of nature be a prompt to guide your prayer time for the multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches across this land.

Take care,

J. D. Payne
Fellowship events are FREE!

**OCTOBER 25-**
**BRUNCH FELLOWSHIP**
Hosted by Mark Millman & the Central Baptist Association of Wisconsin

**Where:** The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Legacy Center 303

**When:** 10:00am-11:00am

**RSVP BY 10/17**

**NOVEMBER 8-**
**BRUNCH FELLOWSHIP**
Hosted by Aaren Gushwa

*Director of Missions, High Desert Baptist Association, Oregon*

**Where:** The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Legacy Center 303

**When:** 10:00am-11:00am

**RSVP BY 10/31**

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**Church Planter Profile: Mike Parker**

**Names of family members**
Mike, Lennette, Brendy, Kelsey, Mallory, Rhenn

**Location** Woodstock, Maryland

**When will you graduate from Southern?**
I am in the M.Div. in Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth (2 + 2 North American Church Planting track), and will complete my degree following my two years of missionary service as a Nehemiah Church Planter.

**What are your primary responsibilities in your ministry?**
Church Planting Pastor, Janitor, Secretary…you name it—I do it!

**Please, briefly describe your ministry.**
The county we have been called to reach, Howard County, is one of the most affluent counties in the United States. Though many missionaries are reaching the down-and-out in the inner city, our ministry requires us to reach the up-and-out in suburbia. Many of these people are searching for significance in their material possessions. They have all of their material needs met, but they are starving spiritually. It is our hope that Real Life Fellowship will guide them to a place where they can have eternal satisfaction in Christ.

**How did your church planting training at Southern help you in preparation for your work on the field?**
The Lord used my time on campus to call me to the ministry of church planting. Upon my arrival at Southern, my heart was impacted by the vision of church planting shared by Dr. J.D. Payne. He introduced me to several church planters and missionaries by hosting informational gatherings and inviting these people to our classes. Also, I grew up as a Southern Baptist and knew what I believed about God, Jesus Christ, and Christianity, but I never took the time to discover why I believed it. The experience at Southern helped strengthen my faith by providing an avenue for this discovery process.

**What is the greatest blessing received since you have been involved in church planting?**
The greatest blessing for me came on Sunday, July 16 at our first Preview Service when we had forty-four adults and sixteen children present. We are part of a cold start (meaning we are starting Real Life Fellowship without a core group). We arrived in Maryland on January 7, 2006, and since that time, I have been doing all the groundwork preparing for our Preview Services and Launch. I had no idea what to expect for our first Preview. I had hoped to see 30 adults present.

**What advice would you give to those who are wondering if God is calling them to be involved in church planting?**
Church Planting is much like navigating an unknown river. You never know what to expect, but with a little effort, prayer, and counsel, you can
overcome whatever lies in front of you. Also, you can be sure that you will experience the Serpent and he will try to intimidate you and those around you. However, your Father is there to comfort and reassure you. He will be with you on the journey!

Regarding church planting, what counsel would you give to those who are called to serve in established churches?
I would ask them to remember that every healthy organism grows and reproduces. Church planting is the church reproducing itself. A healthy church body will be anxious to reproduce itself. It is part of our DNA as the Church. Support those whom God calls into church planting with more than well wishes. Help them with prayer; help them with resources; help them with volunteers; and help them with finances.

For more information about Real Life Fellowship see: www.rfonline.org

Focus Area: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

- 38% of Canadians call Ontario home
- The population of the province of Ontario is 12.6 million
- 6 million people live in the Greater Toronto Area
- Toronto is the commercial, financial, industrial, and distribution center of Canada
- Toronto is often described as Canada’s version of New York City and Los Angeles in one city
- Toronto is a very multi-ethnic city (for example, the present number of select ethnic churches needing to be planted: 92 Chinese; 47 Portuguese; 54 Italian; 38 Polish; 25 Punjabi (Indian))
- There are only 33 Canadian Convention of Southern Baptist (CCSB) churches and/or Bible studies in Ontario
- Over half of the CCSB churches in Ontario worship in a language other than English
- Current estimates project the immediate need for new church plants in Ontario to be 3000
- 34.3% of the population of Ontario consider themselves Catholic; 16% claim no religious affiliation; 11.8% consider themselves affiliated with the United Church; 8.7% consider themselves Anglican; and 3.1% claim to be Muslim
Book Review: *Be Fruitful and Multiply: Embracing God’s Heart for Church Multiplication*


In this easy-to-read work, Logan compiles years of ministry, research, coaching, and church consultation into addressing his passion, church multiplication. His purpose for writing this book is two-fold. First, Logan writes to convince the unconvinced that it is God’s will for every Christian to be involved in a church multiplication movement. Second, he writes to offer a basic framework to assist readers in getting involved in such a movement.

The book is divided into two sections. Section one discusses the biblical roots of church multiplication, issues of contextualization, principles of church multiplication, and suggests different ways people can be involved in multiplication movements. The second section addresses ten essential areas of multiplication movements (spiritual dynamics, shared vision, planning, mobilizing church planters, assessing church planters, coaching church planters, planting new churches, developing multiplying networks, funding) and introduces the reader to action steps and additional resources.

There are numerous strengths of this work. For example, Logan’s emphasis that church multiplication is clearly supported in the Bible is to be commended. He advocates that multiplication movements must be empowered by God, culturally relevant, and consist of reproducible methods that will empower “ordinary people to do extraordinary things” (31). A great importance is placed upon indigenous leadership. Much is written about the role of prayer in multiplication movements. Also, Logan peppers this work with numerous global illustrations, revealing examples and principles from both Western and non-Western church planting practices.

One limitation that I find in this work is that Logan’s systems approach appears too structured to result in church multiplication movements. Much of the book is written for well-established churches and denominations desiring to be involved in such movements. Though I believe that Logan’s paradigm is well needed and will be well received by many groups and will result in the planting of numerous churches, it is a “top-down” approach to multiplication. Though grassroots approaches are discussed, the book seems to advocate the perpetuation of systems that are inherently contra-movement.

I strongly encourage students, missionaries, and denominational leaders to read this work. I know of no other person who has had such a wonderful influence on church planting as Bob Logan. If you desire guidance in creating a healthy atmosphere for church planting in your church or denomination, this book is a must-read. Logan’s passion for multiplying disciples, leaders, and churches is evident throughout this work. May this book be read, digested, and especially applied. -- J. D. Payne