

**Logan, Robert. “Be Fruitful and Multiply” ChurchSmart Resources, 2006.**

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Starting new churches is a critical topic within Christian life, as the impetus for doing or orthopraxy flows out of the nature of the Christian, or being. God’s people are not saved for no reason or inactivity. The call of a Christian life is living out a response to the reality of the gospel, to love God and others because God first loved us (1 John 4:19–21). Living out this salvation from God within the greater context of the church with a specific emphasis upon the local church provides the means for engaging in the mission of Jesus’ followers to make disciples throughout the world (Matt 28:18–20; Acts 1:8). Emphasizing the local church comes from the unique ability of a localized group of united Christians for fulfilling God’s mission. In this local church emphasis, a necessary means of fulfilling the mission of God is in planting new churches. This critical church planting work is appropriately the theological and practical subject of many studies and the object of many discussions within Christianity.

Robert Logan has provided motivating support in the church planting efforts of North America, through conferences, workbooks, websites, and other pathways for influencing the starting of new churches.<sup>1</sup> According to Ed Stetzer’s introductory comments, Logan provides in this work a move beyond church planting to a movement of church planting.<sup>2</sup> Stetzer claims that church planting “is not what it should be—the normal practice of New Testament churches,” and he sees the material of this book as a means for churches to “break through to movements” of

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Logan, *Be Fruitful and Multiply: Embracing God’s Heart for Church Multiplication* (St. Charles, Ill.: ChurchSmart Resources, 2006), 7–9, 11, 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 8, 9. Stetzer may be considered a note-worthy voice of recommendation for any church planting work in North American contexts due to his prolific writing and speaking on the subject.

church planting.<sup>3</sup> The movement emphasis has the primary position in Logan's work as the predominant theme for church planting and for all church life. More than conceptual ideals, Logan also discusses the more practical aspects of planting new churches.<sup>4</sup>

### **Content and Purpose**

Logan's *Be Fruitful and Multiply* is a two part and consequently two purposed work. Rather than assuming agreement among the readers, the work starts with a foundational argument in favor of church planting and multiplication.<sup>5</sup> The second part of the work provides practical aspects of actually doing the church planting.<sup>6</sup> So there is both an argument or thesis-driven purpose and a secondary purpose to provide practical assistance for those convinced of the primary purpose.

The thesis of this work seems to be stated best in the closing remark of the first section of the book: "Multiplication is the normal natural outworking of the church—the way God intended the church to function."<sup>7</sup> In this statement, Logan expresses both the essential element of his claim that God intends church planting to be toward a movement or multiplication-oriented; furthermore, the church, as in all the members of a local church, has a God-intended role in the working out of the churches' multiplication activities.<sup>8</sup>

Logan states that first, he "hopes to convince the unconvinced" of the necessity of multiplication in church planting, not simply church planting itself.<sup>9</sup> To this end, Logan attempts to provide biblical support for the "basic concept of church multiplication," as well as discussing "many different ways God has called [every Christian] to be involved in church

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 14. Logan's thesis is for multiplication, but he also in effect is arguing for church planting in general.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 14, 58

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 14.

multiplication.”<sup>10</sup> The first section is a survey of multiplication as related to church and church planting. Logan briefly surveys a select few historical church planting movements concluding that movements are necessarily formulaic, while all do contain a similar characteristic of multiplication-orientation.<sup>11</sup> For Logan, multiplication is built “into the genetic code” of historically evident church planting movements, as a universally necessary orientation for all functions of the church life, so that multiplication is assumed rather than strived for.<sup>12</sup>

According to Logan, the biblical impetus for multiplication, for all of church life, can be developed or implied from the Created Order command to “be fruitful and multiply,” the global and generational impact of the Abrahamic Covenant, the multiplication inherent in Jesus’ focused discipleship, and in the account of Paul’s missions efforts changing over time to a single teacher “mentoring and multiplying leaders” through selectively training for the purpose of church planting efforts in Asia Minor.<sup>13</sup>

Flowing from the brief introductory assertion that multiplication *is* the precise intention of God for discipleship and church life, Logan supports this by calling for multiplication within all aspects of the church as the best measurement of the health of the church as a whole and of each activity of church life.<sup>14</sup> The church’s role within the mission of God among all people groups demands churches create new churches in order to fulfill the intended purpose which is too great for any single church.<sup>15</sup> In this second, practical segment, the recurring claim is for “reproducible methods” as an essential element in movement and multiplication efforts.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 15–18, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 17, 69.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 19, 20–1. Logan includes all of these various categorically different facets of history in his argument for the church fulfilling its mission through multiplication, seemingly because “multiplication” as a universal characteristic of health is the impetus of the argument.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 26–9.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 17, 31, 37.

Reproducibility is a standard measurement for evaluating whether or not an activity is multiplication-oriented.

In order for multiplication to take root in the DNA or the genetic code of a church and its hopefully subsequent movement of planted churches planting churches, leaders must be developed in order to lead from the “grassroots” level (Acts 2:37–41; Matt 9).<sup>17</sup> Other than leadership roles, every church member has an integral responsibility in the church planting and multiplication (1 Cor 12).<sup>18</sup> Based on a universal call for God’s people to each have a “compassion for the harvest,” every Christian should consider how they fit into the church multiplication efforts according to their gifts, skills, callings, and other individual dynamics of corporate church life.<sup>19</sup> Also discussed are means of involvement in church planting more specifically oriented toward outward focus and activity: prayer for the spiritual warfare, vision casting, calling for expanded understanding of the church’s mission, small group church environments, and developing church planters.<sup>20</sup>

The secondary, pragmatic purpose of the book dealt with in the second section, provides discussion of “ten essential areas of a church multiplication movement and give[s] some basics for getting started in creating movements that are structured, reproducible, and Spirit-led.”<sup>21</sup> These ten essential elements of a church planting strategy that Logan claims will lead to multiplication unto a movement are spiritual dynamics, vision, planning, mobilizing planters,

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 33–8.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 39–40.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid 34, 40, 77–8.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 40–53. While Logan’s concept of church-wide multiplication would naturally lead to church-wide multiplication---i.e. small groups multiplying, orphan adoption multiplication---the emphasis is upon this multiplication leading outside of the local church.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 61.

developing planters, assessing planters, coaching planters, “parenting” new churches, networking, and funding.<sup>22</sup>

Logan calls for an initial and vital step of developing “the spiritual atmosphere” of a church through the centralizing of prayer in the church body.<sup>23</sup> A prayerful church should develop a heart for the harvest, which is a compassion for all others for the purposes of God’s mission.<sup>24</sup> Vision and values are foundational for the planning for the church planting efforts, and Development of systems must be in accordance with the evaluative authority of the priorities of the vision.<sup>25</sup>

Another subordinate theme of the book is the role and work of the church planter, which takes up four chapters of the essential elements of church planting: mobilizing, developing, assessing, and coaching church planters.<sup>26</sup> Logan gives various aspects of “recruiting” church planters as the primary means for a church or denomination thinking through its engaging in church planting. This recruitment paradigm is the primary means for attaining church planters.<sup>27</sup> Planter development is best implemented in practice, through on-the-job apprenticeship.<sup>28</sup> After developing the recruited church planters, assessment of the proposed planters should be conducted.<sup>29</sup> Throughout the mobilizing, developing, and assessing process, coaches for the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 65–176.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 66–76.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 33, 43–4, 77–8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 79–80, 94–5.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 97–148.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 97–109. “Recruitment” may not necessarily refer to only those outside the local church because of the multiplication-orientation of such a church planting church, but attracting potential church planters from outside of the local congregation is definitely part of Logan’s discussion, all of which leads to the ultimate network paradigm Logan espouses.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 111–24. Logan advocates on-the-job or “experiential training” as essential for proper development of church planters based on his understanding of Jesus’ model (112–16). Logan gives four aspects of this kind of training: 1) Environments with multiple opportunities (“cell ministries, Life Transformation Groups, coaching the key leaders”), 2) Apprenticeship rather than simply intern usage, 3) Relational, team-oriented, and coaching, 4) Emphasis on excellence, yet permissive of failed ministry attempts (116).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 125–36.

church planters are developed as well in an effort to multiply the support base of the planters.<sup>30</sup> The parent churches are another part of the support of the planters, but more importantly, parent churches are an assumed mark of church planting movements, since the intention is for churches to plant churches that will plant churches unto an actual movement.<sup>31</sup> Just as Logan asserted a need for all aspects of church life to be multiplying, he calls the different planting entities—planters, coaches, parent churches—to network with others of the same activity or position.<sup>32</sup> Finally, Logan calls for the aforementioned vision and values to again be the standard for funding decisions and prioritizing.<sup>33</sup>

### **Evaluation**

Perhaps the pragmatic nature of this work excuses its minimalist scriptural and theological efforts. Another reason for the scarcity of scriptural work and development of church planting theology could be due to the intended audience assumed by the author: “The book is particularly helpful for denominational leaders, apostolic pastors, and lay leaders who want to discover their role in” church planting and multiplication.<sup>34</sup> Logan’s use of Scripture is rare, and usually the same references are repeated throughout. Instead of being a practical work that is developed from studying the biblical principles and models of church planting observable especially in Acts, Logan employs anecdotal and principled support for his proposed discussions on essential church planting topics. The pragmatic principles and practices could be all that is

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 137–48.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 138–54.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 155–66.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 165–76.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 14.

truly needed by an assumed audience that is already desirous of engaging in church planting, all of which would minimize the depth of theological groundwork for supporting the main thesis.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps the “ten essential areas of a church multiplication movement” could be understood better as only four aspects: 1) discipleship and vision-casting for entering into the mission of the church in accordance with the gospel purpose for all people, 2) planning for working toward this mission, 3) church planter development, and then 4) enacting the plan.<sup>36</sup> The understanding of one’s role in the mission of the church and one’s church in the overall mission of God is an introductory and foundational element of *entering* the mission. Once the vision is accepted and hearts and members are open to God’s use of them for his purposes, *planning* for the mission can begin. As the strategizing is being developed, certain church *planters* or church planting teams can be developed, in accordance with God’s leading through calling and gifting of the church membership.<sup>37</sup> As plans and planters are readied, the *planting* can be enacted. In addition to these aspects, the concepts of networking and funding are implications of the proposed four essentials (1 Cor 9).<sup>38</sup> A simpler outline for church planting would lend itself to the overarching goal of multiplication and movement through reproducibility.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Multiplication is predominantly based on the concept of health—organic, natural reproduction (13–14, 23, 25–9). The biblical argument for multiplication in church ministry is from the Acts account of the spread and numerical growth of the early churches (20–1). An argument for multiplication should look at the disciple-making and church planting paradigms of the New Testament to determine if addition or multiplication are intended, or if they are even mutually exclusive. Obviously Jesus practices multiplication by discipling more than an individual, but Jesus’ discipleship model might not be a self-sufficient argument for complete multiplication-orientation in church life. 2 Timothy 2:2 might be a supporting text for Paul’s perspective, while Paul’s evident practice of incorporating several others in partnership in his ministry is evidenced in Acts. With these and other biblical supports for multiplication, Logan’s argument for multiplication-orientation flows out of the concept of health found in God’s created order, Genesis 1-2, rather than in a well-developed theology of multiplication. The seeming assumption of Logan is that a “health” argument is sufficient to argue for multiplication as a healthy and therefore necessary paradigm for all contexts. This line of reasoning might be insufficiently compelling for some.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

<sup>37</sup> The wording of this evaluation speaks to a more organic and internal raising up of church planters and church planting teams. This critique of Logan’s recruiting method is not a complete denouncing of the recruiting practice, but the local church’s role in the mission calls for emphasis being upon its own membership (Eph 4:1–16).

<sup>38</sup> Logan’s work on funding is a major boon for church planting as he gives several thoughts which will help any financial relationship in ministry. The church planter must have clear guidelines for funding based on the vision, goals supporting that vision, and appropriate processes to achieve the goals (167, 168–9). Funding needs timelines

Perhaps the most serious gap in this work is the absence of a theology of the church and the subsequent starting of new churches and the apostolic workers—church planters—gifted or called to be leaders in the church’s mission efforts of church planting.<sup>40</sup> In affirming the mission of the church and the involvement of all church members in that mission in accordance with God’s unique gifting and calling of the individuals, a work on church planting should build itself upon a theological development of the mission of the church which is based on one’s ecclesiology. Included in the church-mission study is the apostolic gift and calling, those members who are set apart and sent out for new church planting efforts. The assumption seems to be one of equating the mission with church planting or as self-evident to the life of the local church.<sup>41</sup> Logan’s paradigm at least needs a thorough presentation of the ways in which individual members could and should be incorporated into the entire missions work and how the church can mobilize, equip, and support its missions-engaged membership.

No mention is given to those called out as church planters in a non-pastorate dimension, as in the case of the exemplar church planter Paul.<sup>42</sup> Rather, the church planting paradigm is firmly aimed at starting churches under pastor-initiated work from “apostolic pastors,” those pastors who are church planting minded as a kind of combination of the two roles of apostle and

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for processes and goal achievement, as well as a set method for evaluation and cancelling of activities (168). Accountability is needed for fruitfulness of activities and personnel, all based on the vision/mission (169–71).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 17, 31, 37, 177.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 126.

<sup>41</sup> One’s evaluation ought to be fair in accordance with the evident purpose of the work, and in this case, fairness might mean that criticizing Logan for not considering or not offering a fuller paradigm of mission and church planting engagement is inappropriate. Logan’s concern in this book is multiplication dynamics as a conceptual church culture. Logan asserts a “culture” or mentality and therefore a practice of multiplication within the local church. The outflow of this multiplication could likely lead to engaging non-Westerners unto the ends of the earth, but the eventual effects are not the concern of the foundational need for developing a church life which might lead to this desired outcome.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 20–23, 97–109. Paul could possibly have been an elder in the Antioch church as he was listed with the teachers and prophets of that church (Acts 13:1). Whatever may have been Paul’s role in Antioch at one time, his evident church planting role was as an “apostolic” worker, a person sent out from the local church’s immediate context in order to bring the gospel and mission to fruition among other peoples and places through the planting of churches.



elder.<sup>43</sup> A church is to be planted by pastors, rather than in the Acts model of an apostolic worker going out among an unchurched people or place to call locals to believe the gospel message and become God's new people in their place, disciplined and formed into churches, who will in turn replant among their own people and other contexts. Logan does not address this discrepancy.

Even in the paradigm of Paul prioritizing training of church planters in Ephesus, the concept of sending out pastor-church planters is not necessarily evident.<sup>44</sup> Just as Stetzer alludes to the North American significance of Logan's influence, this work's purported paradigm for church planting applies primarily to the Western or pre-existing church context of church planters acting as the head pastor, lead elder, or the core group leader for the new church start. This practice is not a paradigm seen in the examples of church planting missions efforts of Paul and his fellow apostolic partners in Acts.<sup>45</sup> Logan gives no mention of the difference between his purported Pauline model of church planting and the practice he proposes of lead elder church planters.<sup>46</sup> In the historic example of Patrick's indigenizing missions efforts, Logan missed an opportunity to show the alternative church planting strategy of a missionary church planter.<sup>47</sup> There is no mention of the different perspective of church planting in an international setting for missionary, or apostolic, church planting where a church planter does not assume the role of

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 14, 97–109.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 21–3.

<sup>45</sup> It may be inferred that this practice of existing Christians going out as church planters in cross-cultural contexts occurred in Acts following the spread of the first Jerusalem Christians (Acts 8:1, 4). Even if the case of Acts 8 or other spreads of the early Christians throughout the Roman Empire consisted of a church planter moving to a new locale to lead a new congregation as their pastor-elder, there is no indication in Acts of this practice actually being a model of church planting strategy or practice. Perhaps, Timothy and other partners of Paul engaged in the apostolic church planting became head elders that ceased or minimized their ministry of church planting, but this is certainly not seen in Acts and only assumed from the Pauline letters to Timothy years later.

<sup>46</sup> If Paul actually changed his mission efforts throughout his New Testament-recorded ministry with an ultimate strategy implemented during his time in Ephesus, then Paul in Ephesus must lend support for the church planter-pastors, "apostolic pastors," purported by Logan. The reviewer does not hold this view of Paul's strategy shift but simply allows the line of argument in order to show the further gap in Logan's paradigm.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 35–7.

pastor.<sup>48</sup> This critique is not an argument against this church planter-pastor paradigm but intends to indicate a limitation and gap in Logan’s church planting strategizing.

If church planting is dependent upon transplanting—whether the transplant of leadership or the core group—the strategy will be limited in its efforts to indigenize and reproduce. A subsequent church plant will only work so long as another gifted or called leader is raised up and sent out to be the new planter-pastor. The indigenization of the new church plants will always face a difference between the transplanted group or leader and the target people. As has been mentioned regarding the Western-focus of Logan’s paradigm, the concept of a church planter being the new church leader works especially well for same-culture or near-culture contexts, such as may be seen in the Western world or perhaps in some mono-cultural contexts.

### **Concluding Recommendation**

Logan calls for better systematizing and networking of existing churches toward church planting and through implementing multiplication-orientation in all of church life.<sup>49</sup> The emphasis is upon the program, the system, and the paradigm of sufficiently developing and then supporting pastor-elders who will go out to start a new church unto a movement of this same process. Logan’s emphasis upon a foundational spiritual dynamic which will lead to engaging in the mission through multiplication-orientation in all of church life accords with the New

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<sup>48</sup> One should ask Logan regarding his church planting paradigm as to what place is there for the apostolic [Pauline model of a missionary] church planter. This question becomes most significant for those contexts where transplanting strategies or pre-existing churches are not possible. Logan’s paradigm for church planting is not based on “missionaries,” or “apostolic church planters,” or the extended missions activity of the church among the ends of the earth peoples. Logan calls for “apostles” only in relation to considering church planting as ministry being done by pastors, whom he calls “apostolic pastors” seemingly because they are pastors or church leaders that go out to start new churches (14). One contention with Logan’s paradigm is that the difference between North American and international—especially pioneer or minority Christian contexts—church planting is based on contextual methodologies unrecognized by Logan. The emphasis eventually seems to focus on the elders, the pastors, or the church leaders, and not upon the holistic mission of every member of the church being involved in the multiplication unto church planting movements.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 15–18, 27, 58.

Testament churches that seemed to be more focused on an individual's relationship with God according to the gospel of grace and Jesus' resurrection.<sup>50</sup>

As God's people apply the reality of the gospel to their lives specifically in connection with a local church, the Holy Spirit's transformative working catalyzes God's people on mission (Acts 1:8; 13:1–3; Eph 4:1–16). The members of the local church going out to continue the process of the gospel mission through church planting is the paradigm of the churches in Acts (Acts 1:8; 11:19–21; 13:1–3; 15:39–40).

Logan's thought-provoking questions and discussion will prove beneficial complement to working through the biblical model of apostolic church planting and church planting in more localized contexts. The strength of Logan's work is his practical paradigm of developing church planting mentality, planters, and a networked support.

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<sup>50</sup> 1 John exemplifies a simplified concept of Christian and church life: love God, love the church, and lovingly engage the world with the gospel because of God's love (1 John 4:19-21). Pragmatism may provide results or reverse-engineering results may indicate a possible methodology, but the New Testament indicates no formulaic systematization of the spiritually dynamic life of God's people (John 15:1–17). Logan rightly offers a practical paradigm that flows out of one's relationship with God and with God's people.