A Word from the Director

Yesterday, I mowed my lawn for the first time this year (not my favorite thing to do). Since the grass was at least ten feet high, I had to do my usual survey of the grounds for any toys my children may have inadvertently left in the yard. The last thing I wanted was to hit a plastic bottle of bubbles with my lawn mower and recreate a scene from The Lawrence Welk Show.

My excursion for the hidden toys reminded me of the reality that though I may not have seen them upon first glance across my backyard, the truth was such objects did exist. Thankfully, I was able to avoid disseminating shrapnel from a plastic plate, a tennis ball, and yes, a bottle (albeit an empty one) of bubbles.

Upon reflecting on my yard experiences, I wonder if many times we approach missions in North America without “seeing” the reality around us. Such opportunities for gospel proclamation, service, leadership development, and church multiplication exist, but we are not aware of them. During this springtime, we may need to ask the Lord of the Harvest to pull the “grass” back and allow us to see the peoples of North America through His eyes.

In this month’s newsletter, we hear from Nehemiah Church Planter, Michael Clary. Michael and his family are living and working in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. Also, we are introduced to Tom Cheyney, a member of the Church Planting Group of the North American Mission Board. This month’s people group focus is on the Gujar living in the United States, with no known believers (do you “see” them?).

As our semester is coming to an end, I want to remind you of the Church Planting Center’s Family Banquet. You will want to make sure that you RSVP and attend this event. During this end-of-the-semester gathering, we will take a moment to reflect on the blessings and challenges of being a church planting family serving in the United States and Canada.

If we can be of any service to you as you “see” North America through His eyes, please feel free to contact us.

Until next time . . .

J. D.
Church Planter Profile: Michael Clary

Names
Michael, Laura, Reese, Isaiah, Owen

Location
Downtown Cincinnati, OH

When did you graduate from Southern?
December 2008

Please briefly describe your church planting ministry.
We are currently doing a Bible study in my home on Wednesday nights and preparing for a public worship service.

What are your primary responsibilities in your ministry?
I serve as the church planter and lead pastor.

How did your church planting training at Southern help you in preparation for your work on the field?
My time at Southern prepared me with the theological underpinnings of church planting and exposed me to many different models.

What is the greatest blessing received since you have been involved in church planting?
I was born to do this. I’ve never felt more fulfilled in a vocation in my whole life. Getting out of bed in the morning is a great blessing because I’m having so much fun.

What advice would you give to those who are wondering if God is calling them to be involved in church planting?
Get involved in a new work and spend a year with the church planters, observing the ministry. That is the most helpful and practical thing I did before coming to Ohio. I actually spent two-and-a-half years serving in a new church context.

Regarding church planting, what counsel would you give to those who are called to serve in established churches?
Do not feel threatened by church planters. There will be times when they see certain people come to faith in Christ, but need more structure and stability that only an established church can provide. It is during such times, they will guide those new believers to the established churches in the area.

Upcoming Events

MAY 8th
CHURCH PLANTING FAMILY BANQUET
Where: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
President’s Reception Room
When: 6:00pm-8:00pm
Cost: FREE
Limited Childcare Available
RSVP BY 4/23

RSVP:
Church Planting Center
N167
502-897-4498
1-800-626-5525, ext. 4498
churchplanting@sbts.edu
Tom Cheyney
Team Leader
Resource Development & Delivery Team
Church Planting Group, NAMB

About Tom:
Tom serves the Church Planting Group’s Resource Development and Delivery Team as the Resource Development Team Leader. Tom and the RD&DT develop world class resources to assist church planters with the growth of new churches. A large portion of his duties revolve around the managing and continued development and deployment of helpful tools and resources for church planters, church planting missionaries, and sponsoring churches. Additionally, Tom has written over five hundred articles and training materials on church growth, church revitalization, and church planting. He has served in various pastoral and church planting ministries and with the denomination for over 15 years.

Tom and his wife Cheryl have two children. Ashleigh is seventeen, and their son Drew is twenty-two and a senior in college. They live in Cumming, Georgia. Tom’s hobbies include building classic cars, playing tennis, and writing in his free time.

Word of Encouragement from Tom Cheyney:
Now is a great time to participate in missionary endeavors in North America and the North American Mission Board! If you are interested in church planting, you can contact us [www.ChurchPlantingVillage.net](http://www.ChurchPlantingVillage.net). For the latest resources in church planting, check out the Church Planters Resources Library on the home page.

Contact Information:
Telephone: 770/410-6221
Email: tcheyney@namb.net

If you are a student at Southern Seminary or Boyce College and are interested in getting hands-on experience serving as a church planting intern, contact the Church Planting Center (churchplanting@sbts.edu). There are several church planting internships available across North America throughout 2009.
People Group Profile: Gujar of the United States

One of the world’s least reached people groups: YES

Primary religion: Hinduism

Percent evangelical: 0.0%
Percent Christian Adherents: 0.0%

Estimated population in the United States: 240,000

Largest States on file:
- New Jersey (50,000)
- California (35,000)
- Illinois (30,000)
- Texas (20,000)
- New York (18,000)
- Georgia (12,000)
- Florida (11,000)
- Pennsylvania (9,400)
- Michigan (6,900)
- Maryland (6,300)

Taken from:

“Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you”
2 Thessalonians 3:1 NASB