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MS 615 Foundations of Church Growth ME700 Principles of Church Growth

Art McPhee

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I. Course Description

The foundational principles and strategies of the Church Growth Movement seen as one approach to the issues in mission strategy and evangelization and as a means to inform congregational outreach and expansion. Draws from the apostolic vision and legacy of Donald McGavran. Focuses on both Western and Two-Thirds World Case Studies. Prerequisite for MS615 students: IS501.

II. Course Objectives

1. To raise consciousness regarding the history and logic of the Church Growth approach to evangelism and mission.
2. To equip the student with the classical principles, and some of the newer insights, discovered by Church Growth (and similar approaches to) research.
3. To develop the capacity to critique ministries and approaches to evangelism and mission, and thereby advance the practice.
4. To facilitate the student’s beginning contribution to Church Growth research, reflection, and literature.

III. Required Reading

MS615 Students


5. McPhee, Arthur G. *The Road to Delhi: Bishop Pickett Remembered, 1890-1981*. Bangalore, India, 2005 (pp. 95-134; 177-252)


**ME700 Students**

In addition to the books above, read two of the following:


    Or, if you are pressed for time this semester, this condensed version:


IV. Writing Assignment Options for the Course

You will need to accept responsibility for your own learning. This responsibility will normally be exercised through (1) regular and involved class attendance; (2) the thorough reading of the assigned textbooks and readings, and submission of a reading report; (3) the writing of a research paper; and (4) the satisfactory completion of a final examination.

The Reading Report: Photocopy and use one reading report form (sample attached to this syllabus) for each of the assigned readings. Staple (don’t use a paperclip) these together and turn them in on December 4.

The Research Paper: By Thursday, December 4, you need to submit a research paper of 2,500 to 2,800 words. It should be based upon some appropriate blend of library research and field research. Consider the following options for the paper:

1. The story and analysis of the growth history of a local church, emphasizing the causes of the growth that might be reproducible or adaptable for other churches. In most cases, you would normally focus on the recent growth of the church, say within the past decade, but a more historical analysis of a significant growth period would be welcome.

2. The story and analysis of the growth history of a unit of a (presumably large) local church, emphasizing the causes of the growth that might be reproducible or adaptable for other churches. “Unit” here refers to, say, a specific worship service, or the Sunday School, or even a specific Sunday School class, or the youth ministry, or the recovery ministry, or some other organized part of the church.

3. The story and analysis of the local spread of the gospel among some distinct target population, such as “builders” or “boomers” or “busters,” or unchurched men, or youth, or single adults, or retarded adults, or deaf people, or addictive people, or a distinctive ethnic population or socio-economic class. (Students will find the categories (and modeling) in Arn’s White Unto Harvest to be very useful for this option.

4. A more traditional term paper, on a Church Growth topic or the main insights of some specific writer, instead of one of the field research assignments. If you are so inclined, see the instructor to get feedback on a proposed topic. The supplementary bibliography by George Hunter at the end of this syllabus will be especially useful to students doing a traditional term paper.

For any of the first three options, you need to identify, early in the course, the local church (or churches) in which to do the field research. You will negotiate and do on-site “field research” (interviews, observation, and focused historical analysis) to determine causes for the growth. Base the paper upon the most insightful and promising data that you collect -- much of which will illustrate some established church growth principles, some of which may lead you to suggest new hypotheses. The paper may include anecdotal, and even inspirational, material derived from the field research.
Many of you will need to identify their topic early, especially in regard to a topic that might require inter-library loan or data to be sent from some field.

Whichever option you choose, write the paper so that it can be understood by someone who has not taken a Church Growth course.

Follow precisely the guidelines in Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertation*, the 7th edition. Only papers that do will be accepted and graded. Proofread and edit every paper; two edits are better than one.

V. Final Exam

All students will need to complete a final examination covering the assigned readings, class sessions, and other course resources. The instructor expects the exam to call for short essays—for which you should bring several blue books.

Those taking the 700 level version of the course will want to prepare for an “extra” question on the final exam:

“*Trace the development of key Church Growth insights in the mind of Donald McGavran, and delineate what you regard as the most strategic ones for Church Growth research today.*”

Students taking the 600 level version of the course will have 1 and 1/2 hours to complete the exam. Students taking the 700 version will have 2 hours. In each version of the exam, international students (for whom English is a second language) may take an additional half hour to complete the exam.

VI. Grading

One-third of your grade for the course will be based upon performance on the examination, another third on the research paper, and the final third on class involvement timely completion of the reading assignments.

VII. Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

*(The reading assignments for some weeks are light. Therefore, I strongly suggest that you read ahead during those weeks in the three books that come due in the final weeks of the course, beginning November 6.)*

September 4  
Course Introduction  
      Historical Overview of Church Growth
Indian Roots
Americanization
Read: *The Road to Delhi*, pp. 95-134; 177-252

September 11  The Logic of Church Growth (Part 1)
 getUserInterpResults
 Church Growth Eyes
 Church Growth as Faithfulness
 The “Evangelism Versus Social Concern” Debate
 Read: *Understanding Church Growth*, chapter 1 (Be sure you are reading the 1970 edition.)

September 18  The Logic of Church Growth (Part 2)
 getUserInterpResults
 God’s Will and Today’s Task
 Dispelling the Fog
 The “Quantitative Versus Qualitative” Debate
 Read: *Understanding Church Growth*, chapters 2-4

September 25*  The Logic of Church Growth (Part 3)
 getUserInterpResults
 Diagnosing Church Health
 Where to Search for Causes of Growth
 The “Discipling Versus Perfecting” Debate
 Read: *Understanding Church Growth*, chapters 5-7

October 2  The Logic of Church Growth (Part 4)
 getUserInterpResults
 Helps and Hindrances
 Revival and Church Growth
 The “Evangelism Versus Revitalization” Debate
 Read: *Understanding Church Growth*, chapters 8-9

October 9*  The Logic of Church Growth (Part 5)
 getUserInterpResults
 Homogeneous Units
 The “Homogeneous Unit” Debate
 Read: *Understanding Church Growth*, chapters 10-11

October 16  The Logic of Church Growth (Part 6)
 getUserInterpResults
 Church Growth in Social Classes
 Resistance and Receptivity
 Redemption and Lift
 Read: *Understanding Church Growth*, chapter 12-14

October 23  The Logic of Church Growth (Part 7)
 getUserInterpResults
 Discipling Urban Populations
 Read: *Understanding Church Growth*, chapter 15

October 30  The Logic of Church Growth (Part 8)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>The Contribution of George Hunter</td>
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<td>Church Growth Perspectives on Two Historical Movements</td>
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<td>Apostolic Congregations and Their Leaders</td>
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<td>Church Growth and Ministry Groups</td>
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<td>Catalytic and Proliferation Growth</td>
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<td>Read: <em>Radical Discipleship</em></td>
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<td>November 13*</td>
<td>Church Size and Church Growth</td>
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<td>Plateaus and Barriers</td>
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<td>The Seeker Church Phenomenon</td>
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<td>The “Large Versus Small Church” Debate</td>
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<td>Read: <em>How to Break Growth Barriers</em></td>
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<td>November 20</td>
<td>Church Growth and Church Planting</td>
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<td>An Overview of Church Planting Methods</td>
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<td>Assimilating New Members</td>
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<td>Ten Insights for Church Planting Success</td>
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<td>Begin reading: <em>Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: 5 Views</em></td>
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<td>November 27</td>
<td>(No class, Thanksgiving/Reading Week)</td>
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<td>December 4</td>
<td>Wither Church Growth?</td>
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<td>Evaluating the Church Growth Movement</td>
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<td>New Directions</td>
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<td>Finish reading: <em>Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: 5 Views</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>December 11</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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Reading Report Form

Name:

SPO:

Course Title and number:

Book or article (author or editor, title, place, publisher, date):

Pages read:

For books, list the number and title of the chapter (and author if different from above) you found most helpful:

Copy one quotation from the above chapter or article that seemed particularly important to you: (Page ____):

Interact in your own words with the portion you quoted above:

Offer one well-conceived question for class discussion of the book or article:

(Please do not exceed this page)
Selected Bibliography
by George G. Hunter III

Themes in Church Growth (and related) Studies:


________. *Church Growth Through Groups*. Center for Church Growth, 1990.


Hunter, George G. III. *Church for the Unchurched*. Abingdon, 1996.


Neighbor, Ralph W. *Where Do We Go From Here?: A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church*. Torch, 1990.


_______. *Spiritual Power and Church Growth*: Strang Communications, 1986.


_______. *Your Church Can Be Healthy*. Abingdon, 1979.


_______. *Churchquake! How the New Apostolic Reformation is Shaking Up the Church As We Know It*. Regal, 1999.


Studies relevant to Church Growth in Europe, North America, Australia:

Many available from Church Growth Institute. ph. 1-800-423-4844


______. *Where Have All Our People Gone?* Pilgrim, 1979.


______ and Bill Cornelius. *Go Big! Lead Your Church to Explosive Growth*. 2006.


George, Carl F. *Prepare Your Church For the Future.* Revell, 1991.


______. *What Can We Do About Church Dropouts?* Abingdon, 1990.


_______. *How To Reach Secular People.* Abingdon, 1992.
_______. *Church for the Unchurched.* Abingdon, 1996.

_______. *Your Church Has Doors: How to Open the Front and Close the Back.* Church Growth Analysis and Learning Center, 1983.


McCalep, George O. *Faithful Over a Few Things: Seven Critical Church Growth Principles.* 1996


_________. *One Size Doesn’t Fit All*.


_________. *Biblical Church Growth: How You Can Work with God to Build a Faithful Church*. 2003


Murrow, David. Why Men Hate Going to Church. 2005


Oswald, Roy M. and Speed B. Leas. The Inviting Church: A study of New Member Assimilation.


Smith, Glenn C. ed. *Evangelizing Adults.*


Teykl, Terry. *Pray and Grow.* Discipleship Resources.


———. *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital Signs of a Healthy Church.* Regal, 1976.

———. *Your Church Can Be Healthy.* Abingdon, 1979.


———. *Churchquake! How the New Apostolic Reformation is Shaking Up the Church As We Know It.* Regal, 1999.


_____. *Dare To Grow.* David C. Cook, 1993.

**Notable Studies of Church Growth Among Third World and Ethnic Minority Peoples:**


Gates, Alan Frederick. *Christianity and Animism in Taiwan*.


Lawrence, Carl. *The Church in China*.


McGavran, Donald A. *Church Growth in Jamaica*.


_________. Where Do We Go From Here? Houston, TX: Touchstone Publications, 1990.


_________. Christ’s Way to India’s Heart. Lucknow Publishing House, 1938.


Classroom Identification Label

INSTRUCTIONS:

A. PRINT YOUR NAME WITH BOLD, DARK LETTERS AS INDICATED IN THE SPACES BELOW. USE MARKERS IF PROVIDED BY THE PROFESSOR.

B. FOLD DOWN ON THE DASHED LINE

C. PLACE THIS PART ON THE DESKTOP UNDER A BOOK OR NOTEBOOK AND HANG THE NAME TAG OVER THE FRONT EDGE.

D. PLEASE PRESERVE THIS AND USE IT IN ALL CLASS SESSIONS.

Fold here

First name or nickname

Last name