

# CHURCH GROWTH BULLETIN

INSTITUTE OF  
CHURCH GROWTH

Address:  
FULLER THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY  
135 N. Oakland  
Pasadena, Calif. 91101  
DONALD A. MCGAVRAN, B.D., Ph.D.  
Director

May 1972

Subscription \$1 per year

Volume VIII No. 5

## CHURCH GROWTH BURGEONING AROUND THE WORLD

—a personal report by Donald McGavran

Between last November 11th and March 15th, I had a splendid chance to observe the rising interest in church growth in many lands. Fuller Seminary gave me a sabbatical quarter, Union Biblical Seminary in India asked me to teach there for six weeks. And hearing that I was going out, church growth men in 12 lands asked me to help them conduct church growth seminars. This I was delighted to do. It afforded me great opportunity to see first hand church growth potentials and responsive populations in many lands. I visited Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Thailand South, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand North, South India, Central India, West Pakistan, Ethiopia and England. In each of two lands, two seminars were held. A total of 14 seminars were held. More than 1500 ministers and missionaries attended. The journey also allowed me to visit Prof. Peter Beyerhaus, the architect of the Frankfurt Declaration, in Tubingen, Germany where he is Professor of Mission in the University. He is a prophet of God sent for our times.

I was cheered by what I saw in these four months and my findings will interest readers of the Bulletin.

1. All of the lands I visited had some men in them who were looking at church and mission work with church growth eyes. They compared traditional ways of mission with those which in fact communicate the Gospel and multiply congregations. These men had gotten together to discuss church growth, get out church growth sheets, share church growth books, send the Church Growth Bulletin to their friends, and in many other ways evangelize effectively. All along the way I found a welcome for the idea that the current seminar would be known as The First Annual Church Growth Seminar and that each succeeding year a church growth workshop in the national language would be convened - and manned by local churchmen and missionaries. In Pakistan three previous church growth seminars had already been held, largely at the initiative of Fred Stock of the Presbyterian Mission.
2. Church growth was being built into evangelistic campaigns and other Christian work. For example, in the Philippines, the seminar

**SEND correspondence, news, and articles to the Editor, Dr. Donald McGavran, at the Institute of Church Growth, Fuller Theological Seminary. Published bi-monthly, send subscriptions and changes of address to the Business Manager, Norman L. Cummings, Overseas Crusades, Inc., 265 Lytton Avenue, Palo Alto, California 94301, U.S.A. Second-class postage paid at Palo Alto, California.**

formed an integral part of "Christ The Only Way" campaign being led by Nene Ramientos and Jim Montgomery of Overseas Crusades. One of the Philippine objectives was to establish 10,000 (yes, ten thousand) Lay Evangelistic Group Bible Studies. Since these were led by laymen and each group (to warrant the name "evangelistic") had to include a large number of those who did not know Christ, it was expected that many groups would develop into new churches. If the campaign should start 1000 new churches - and that is quite possible - it will mark a new day in evangelistic campaigns.

3. Seminaries were finding that church growth was a part of their job. Seminaries sponsored and housed four of the seminars. The principals of two seminaries (which had been doing no church planting before) expressed determination to make church planting a part of their program. And why not? Ministers in training in Africa, where only a tiny per cent of the population knows Christ, ought to be taught how to lead laymen to multiply congregations. Church growth through theological education!! Dr. Paul Gupta of Hindustan Bible Institute, which is going to start a B.D. program in 1973, thought his seminary could plant 100 churches in Madras City alone. At Union Seminary at Chiangmai, Principal John Hamlin and Professor Allan Eubanks showed themselves to be enthusiastic church growth men.
4. A new technique in communication was discovered in the Hong Kong Church Growth Seminar. All the lectures in English were translated into beautiful Cantonese by Wilson Chan of the Bible Society and taped by Bill Kinkade who duplicated and sold them. The tapes immediately made church growth thinking available to Christians who speak only Cantonese. Marvelous! Taping oral translations should be widely used to multiply effective communication of the Gospel across language barriers. On hearing of tapes available in Cantonese, Professor Tippett in Pasadena said, "Cantonese is what the Chinese in Fiji speak. Chinese ministers there ought to get copies of the Wilson Chan tapes."
5. In the Seminar held in London at All Nations Missionary College, under the leadership of Ron Davies and E. W. Oliver, a large number of church growth books were sold and an English Branch of the Church Growth Book Club opened. Soon CGB will print the London address from which sterling area people can order church growth books. It also appears likely that a British version of the Church Growth Bulletin will be published. Every two months, the British editor will get an air mail manuscript of this World Bulletin. He will then discard up to half of it, add 'made in the Commonwealth' news and articles, and mail out to his mailing list. This decentralization will benefit effective gospel propagation in any country where a church growth man is willing to gather and edit germane news and articles, keep his mailing list up to date, and mail out

the Area CGB. It will take several days every two months, but will make the Bulletin more helpful. It will fit the culture better! Any church growth men volunteering to be regional editors?

6. Many men, who had never set foot in the United States, shared in holding great commission convictions and looking at the spread of the faith with realism and accuracy. This is gratifying. The School of Missions at Fuller Seminary has no monopoly on church growth knowledge. We rejoice in the large number of men and women devoting their lives to effective evangelism and to learning increasingly more about it. I rejoiced to meet notable church growth men like Alex Smith of the OMF in Thailand and Peter Coterell of the SIM in Ethiopia.

During the coming great increase of the Church, the cause needs tens of thousands of nationals and missionaries who spread the Good Tidings effectively. These men will teach in church growth workshops, write church growth bulletins and do research in what makes churches grow and not grow. In the power of the Holy Spirit they will proclaim Christ far and wide, baptize millions, and plant multitudes of congregations. Harnessing radio to people movements to Christ remains yet to be done. Speeding up sound discipling through skillful use of literature and tape recorders offers exciting possibilities in the liberation of receptive populations. Recorders, for example, are being used imaginatively to multiply baptized believers among the Karens in North Thailand.

7. Clearing houses for national and foreign apostles are beginning to develop. In a small way this is what each church growth seminar is. Apostles exchange information about what methods God is blessing to the effective communication of Christ. The exchange takes place across denominational, cultural, racial, and linguistic lines. Those devoted to carrying out the Great Commission come together and share what they know. And what we all together know about obedient and joyful harvesting is very considerable!
8. Blessedly, the tired old problems were not often heard at these seminars. In some quarters mission meetings have, alas - in the dark days which have followed World War II - been marked by much pessimism. The debris of old defeats (cliches about tensions, missionary stupidity, renaissance of the great religions, weaknesses of nationals, the early expected demise of the missionary movement, ten good reasons why the Church is going down hill, glorification of littleness, and the like) have formed the substance of addresses given by some national leaders and missionaries. In contrast, the seminars were marked by a healthy critical optimism. Speakers told of triumphs of the Gospel, opportunities for advance, and new churches which have been established. Problems were rec-

ognized as opportunities to work at solutions. The remarkable openness of so many populations in so many lands gladdened our hearts. Church growth people are proud to be part of the apostalate.

9. Urban church growth seemed increasingly possible. For example, Mr. Ezra, a Tamilian minister, told the seminar held in South India of planting 23 new urban churches - a remarkable story of how two missionaries of the Oriental Missionary Society came to Madras City fifteen years ago and, starting from scratch, with absolutely no church, have now 23 congregations, 1523 communicant members and a community of about 3000. If this has been accomplished by two foreign missionaries and their helpers, how much more could have been accomplished by those denominations in Madras City who fifteen years ago had 2000, 20,000, or 50,000 communicants and a battalion or two of able Indian laymen and ministers! Mr. Ezra's story was typical. Great numbers of people wait to be liberated into the glorious liberty of Christ - and those nationals and missionaries who have hard and bold plans for discipling and work forward in the power of the Holy Spirit, find their labors blessed by God.
10. The conciliar Churches and missions (which alas in some lands stayed aloof from the Church Growth Seminars) in Indonesia, North Thailand, West Pakistan not only attended but took vigorous part. In Indonesia, Mr. Maitimoe, the Executive Secretary of the Council's Committee on Evangelism, drew up a splendid set of findings which called for a series of regional church growth seminars, to help the churches meet the great opportunities for propagating the Gospel. I rejoiced at such action of conciliar groups. The tragedy of the Uppsala emphasis on social action in place of evangelism is that it comes at just the time when church-multiplying evangelism is the need of the hour. It is so welcomed by multitudes of Non-Christians. One hopes that in many lands the conciliar forces will return to vigorous proclamation of the Gospel, baptizing of penitent believers, and establishing tens of thousands of new churches. We should be much in prayer for this to happen.

#### GIVE AFRICANS A CHANCE TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST

THE CLIMATE OF CHANGE IN AFRICA WILL DRASTICALLY AFFECT OUR PRESENT MISSIONARY PROGRAM...BUT FAR FROM ITS COMING TO AN END, I FIRMLY BELIEVE WE ARE STANDING AT THE THRESHOLD OF OUR GREATEST OPPORTUNITY...AS LONG AS MILLIONS REMAIN WITHOUT CHRIST, OF WHOM MULTITUDES ARE RECEPTIVE TO THE GOSPEL, WE NEED MORE, NOT FEWER, MISSIONARIES. IN WEST CAMEROONS, FOR EXAMPLE, MISSIONARIES WILL NEVER FIND THEMSELVES OUT OF A JOB UNTIL ONE AND ONE-HALF MILLION WESTCAMEROONIANS LOVE JESUS CHRIST AND ARE FAITHFUL MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH. WITH THE IMMENSITY OF THE TASK OUR CALL TO MISSIONS IS PERENNIAL.

Dr. Lloyd Kwast, Baptist Herald, April 1972