

Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

Volume 25 Issue 11

PO Box 892589, Temecula, CA 92589-2589

November 2013

Entry Events

What pastor has not encouraged members to bring a friend to church next Sunday? And research tells us that friends bringing friends is the primary way churches grow. But in plateaued and declining congregations, most people don't invite friends to church.

Generally, it's because members are unsure whether their unchurched friends will find the experience of interest or relevance to their life. And the

risk of inviting a friend is not seen as worth the benefit. So, how can you see more church members inviting more friends and relatives to church events?

The remedy to the problem of members not inviting friends may seem counter-intuitive. It is: conduct more events. You can support your church members' disciple-making endeavors by increasing the number of events to which they can comfortably invite friends.

The key word is "comfortably." Let's be honest, for most church members, it's uncomfortable to invite a friend or neighbor to a Sunday church service. It just seems too intrusive into the friend's life, and creates an awkward situation if the friend says "no". Many members feel it's too likely to strain the relationship. But that's because the unspoken agenda behind the invitation is that the church is the beneficiary. It often feels like the member is "using" the relationship for the benefit of the church.

But when the church can provide events that are more likely to be interesting to the unchurched friend or family, then the assumption behind the invitation changes. Now the friend is the beneficiary.

Consider the difference between an invitation to a neighbor family with two elementary-age kids to church, compared to an invitation to the same family to a Halloween party at the church. There are several benefits in promoting the latter. First, if the church member has never invited an unchurched person or family to church, inviting them to *anything* involving the church is going to take a monumental effort. But people invited to a Halloween

Let's be honest, for most church members, it's uncomfortable inviting friends to church.

Check out Dr. McIntosh's new website for additional articles.

New website address:

www.churchgrowthnetwork.com

Participate in discussions at

churchgrowthnetwork.com/site/blog

Do regular attendees invite friends to church?

Schedule a minimum of four entry events each year.

carnival are more likely to want to return to other church-related events. And the parents are more likely to want to bring them.

These kind of church-sponsored activities are called “entry events.” An Entry Event is a high-visibility activity/event, sponsored by the church, designed to be of interest to both church and unchurched in the community. The goal of an effective Entry Event is to see a large number of unchurched adults/families attend this event with the idea of developing those contacts into deeper relationships over time.

Here are a few examples of events to which members will more likely invite unchurched friends, neighbors and relatives:

Holidays/Seasonal

- Valentine's Day Father/Daughter banquet
- Christmas Pageant
- Halloween/Harvest Festival
- 4th of July celebration
- Memorial Day picnic and parade

Sports

- Super Bowl Sunday
- Trip to local sports game
- Local Christian sports celebrity speaker

Family/Parenting Issues

- “Discipline For Your Child” seminar
- Guest speaker on relevant topic/s
- “Beginning a Blended Family” seminar
- “Potty Training Your Youngster” workshop

Marital Issues

- Getting Started in Your Marriage seminar

- “Handling Divorce” seminar
- Guest speaker on relevant topic/s

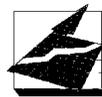
Special Interests

- Visit to local points of interest
- Picnic
- “Welcome to the Neighborhood” orientation
- Tax planning
- Parent/kid hike

Kids Events:

- Taffy pull
- Ice cream social
- Pet show & races
- Swimming party
- Pinewood Derby race

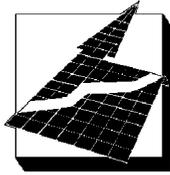
Conducting successful, high-visibility entry events is not only fun, it contributes to the visibility of your church and raises the “corporate self-esteem” of the congregation. But keep in mind that “successful” entry events should be judged on the number of *unchurched* people who attend, not the number of church members



Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.
See the full article on Dr.
McIntosh's blog at

<http://churchgrowthnetwork.com/site/blog>

Growth Points is published twelve times a year. The subscription price is \$20 (Bank or World Money Order) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. For other reprint usage, advance permission must be obtained. Formerly published under the title *Church Growth Network*. Copyrighted 2013 ISSN 1520-5096



Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: 5 Views

Ministry Insights for Church Leaders

P.O. Box 892589 Temecula, CA 92589-2589
www.churchgrowthnetwork.com

Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: 5 Views

Gaining form and momentum over the second half of the 20th century, the Church Growth Movement has become an enormous shaping force on the Western church today. You may love it, you may hate it, but you can't deny its impact.

But what exactly is Church Growth? In what ways has the movement actually brought growth to the church, and how effective has it been in doing so?

What are its strengths and weaknesses? This timely book addresses such questions. After providing a richly informative history and overview, it explores—in a first-ever roundtable of their leading voices—five main perspectives, both pro and con, on the classic Church Growth Movement:

- Effective Evangelism View (Elmer Towns)
- Gospel and Our Culture View (Craig Van Gelder)
- Centrist View (Charles Van Engen)
- Reformist View (Gailyn Van Rheen)
- Renewal View (Howard Snyder)

Each view is first presented by its proponent, then critiqued by his co-contributors. The book concludes with reflections by three seasoned pastors who have grappled with the practical implications of Church Growth. The interactive and fair-minded nature of the format allows the reader to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each view and

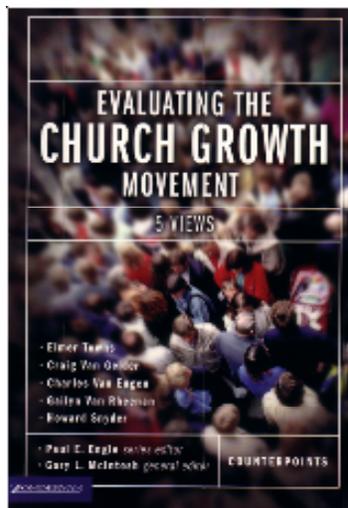
draw informed, personal conclusions.

Each of the contributors agree that the Church Growth Movement has been, and continues to be, extremely influential. Of course, some believe this influence is positive, while others see it as somewhat negative. But they all admit the Church Growth Movement cannot be ignored.

The positions and responses of each contributor will stimulate a great deal of personal reflection.

Order *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement* today for \$16.99 plus shipping and handling. Call for special discount on ten or more copies to the same address.

**Order today by
calling toll free
1-877-506-3086**



Yes, send me _____ copy(s) of
Evaluating the Church Growth Movement at
\$16.99 each (\$21.99 outside U.S.A. on U.S.
Funds/Bank)
plus S/H of \$4.50 for the U.S.A. and \$5.50 in
Canada. CA residents add 8.00% tax.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Visa or MC #: _____
Exp: ____ / ____ 3-digit code _____
Signature: _____