

1985

Review: The World's 20 Largest Churches

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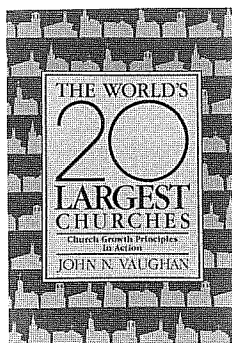
Recommended Citation

Hindson, Edward, "Review: The World's 20 Largest Churches" (1985). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. Paper 129.
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THE WORLD'S 20 LARGEST CHURCHES
by John Vaughn

Reviewed by Ed Hindson, senior editor,
Fundamentalist Journal.



Church growth is no longer a phenomenon limited to America. In this definitive study John Vaughn surveys the world's 20 largest churches and examines the principles of growth that have made them great. While Baptist churches, both Southern and Independent, dominate the American church scene, this is clearly not the case worldwide.

Korean churches of various denominations lead the international list in membership and attendance. The Full Gospel Central Church of Seoul, Korea, with a 25,000-seat auditorium, is presented as the largest church in the world, with a composite membership of 130,000 and average Sunday worship attendance of 105,000!

Other churches include: Young Nak Presbyterian, Seoul (29,600); Soong-Eui Methodist, Inchon (12,167); Sungrak Baptist, Seoul (8,079); Chung-Hyeon Presbyterian, Seoul (8,066); Kwang Lim Methodist, Seoul (7,076). Virtually all the Korean churches are Charismatic in doctrine and practice.

Latin American membership leaders include the Jotabeche Methodist Pentecostal Church in Santiago, Chile (50,336); Brazil for Christ, San Paulo,

Brazil (25,000); Congregacao Crista, Sao Paulo (23,640); Mafureira Assembly, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (17,333); and the Evangelistic Center in San Salvador, El Salvador (17,000). As with the Korean superchurches the Latin American leaders are also predominantly Charismatic.

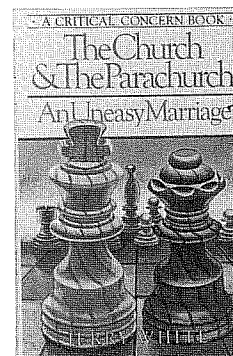
The North American scene is quite different, where only 2 of 12 churches listed are Charismatic: Melodyland Christian Center, Anaheim, California (11,000); and Calvary Chapel, Santa Ana, California (10,175). Among the North American leaders, First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, led all others in membership, 37,133; worship attendance, 18,500; and Sunday school attendance, 18,500. Other Independent Baptist leaders include Highland Park Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee (25,646); Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia (21,000); and Akron Baptist Temple, Akron, Ohio (14,000). Grace Community Church, Panorama City, California (7,333), pastored by John MacArthur, is the only non-Baptist, non-Charismatic church in the entire list.

Southern Baptist leaders include: First Baptist, Dallas, Texas (22,700); First Southern Baptist, Del City, Oklahoma (17,250); First Baptist, Houston, Texas (14,900); Bellevue Baptist, Memphis, Tennessee (13,249); North Phoenix Baptist, Phoenix, Arizona (12,845).

The author follows the church analysis style originally presented by Elmer Towns over 10 years ago in *The Ten Largest Sunday Schools*. Surveys chart the churches' attendance and membership growth over the last 10 years. Individual chapters analyze the pastor of each church and the style of his leadership. This study is fair and straightforward. Conclusions are obvious and clear. Baptists are the church growth leaders in America and Charismatics are the leaders overseas. (Baker Books, 1984, 293pp., \$12.95)

**THE CHURCH AND THE PARACHURCH:
AN UNEASY MARRIAGE**
by Jerry White

Reviewed by John D. Morrison, assistant professor of theology, Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia.



The relationship between the local church and the parachurch ("para-local" to some) organizations has been cordial at best and strained as a rule. Jerry White, executive director of the Navigators, can surely speak from firsthand experience to the misunderstandings and tensions that appear inherent to the situation, and does so in the recent release *The Church and the Parachurch: An Uneasy Marriage*. White's introductory chapter, entitled "Who is doing the work of the Kingdom?" seeks to set out the views and feelings of both sides. Throughout, White works hard for a fair declaration of the issues.

White proceeds to give a well-organized and readable analysis of historical and biblical-theological materials whereby he hopes to prove the viability of the "para-local" church organization. He analyzes the weaknesses of both, and his final assessments are significant, giving needed perspective to us all. His recommendations are must reading (after one has