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Review: The Church and the Parachurch: An Uneasy Marriage

John D. Morrison

Liberty University, jdmorrison@liberty.edu

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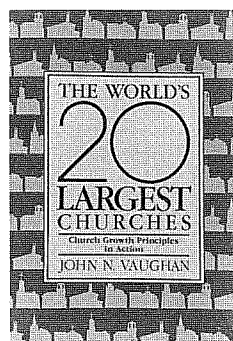
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THE WORLD'S 20 LARGEST CHURCHES
by John Vaughn

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 super-churches the Latin American leaders are also predominantly Charismatic.

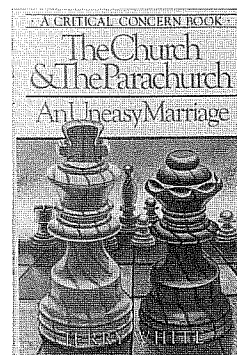
The North American scene is quite different, where only 2 of 12 churches listed are Charismatic: Melodyland Christian Center, Anaheim, California (11,000); and Calvary Chapel, Santa Ana, California (10,175). Among the North American leaders, First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, led all others in 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

read all that has led up to those conclusions). All in all, this is an excellent treatment, both refreshing and painfully insightful.

White's analysis of church history caused him to occasionally draw principles from times when some of the situations and issues were different from today. In chapter three he seeks to synthesize the biblical material into a theological whole, and he brings in much good information (interestingly from Earl Radmacher, a strong local church advocate) to show that "church" can refer to both the universal body of Christ and to local churches. Yet, he occasionally seeks to render conclusions from scriptural silences or from questionable interpretive processes. These are rare, though, and who among us is immune to such difficulties? (Multnomah Press, 1983, 183pp., \$9.95)

P A S T O R S

CHRIST AND THE BIBLE
by John W. Wenham

This very helpful volume is committed to the thesis that Christ's view of Scripture ought to guide our view today. Dealing with such topics as Jesus' authority, His view of the Old and New Testaments, the Canon, and the reliability of Scripture, it specializes in "problem passages" and in answering several critical charges. (Baker Book House, 1984, 206pp., \$7.95) —G.R.H.

HOW TO GROW AN ADULT CLASS
by Tom Barnard

The thesis of Barnard's book is that "successful" adult Sunday school classes are determined by the quality of relationships that exist among its group members. Seven factors that affect this quality are analyzed by the author, including: the teacher, class organization, care groups, activities, outreach, class sessions, and personal evangelism. (Beacon Hill Press, 1983, 84 pp., \$2.95) —R.H.

THE YOUTH LEADER'S SOURCEBOOK
edited by Gary Dausey

This book is a refreshing contribution to a literary market often criticized

for its fads. Twenty-five youth leaders combine their expertise and experience on such useful themes as laying an appropriate foundation and planning purposeful activities for contemporary youth work. Representing a cross section of professions and perspectives, these writers have produced a helpful resource in a practical symposium for youth workers. (Zondervan, 1983, 332pp., \$14.95) —R.H.

JOHN BUNYAN: PILGRIM AND DREAMER
by Ernest Bacon

This is a new and appreciative biography of the famous Baptist Puritan of the seventeenth century. The author, who previously wrote a biography on Spurgeon, attempts to make Bunyan and his Puritan principles come alive to the twentieth-century reader. He gives a thorough discussion of Puritan England as the setting for Bunyan's life and then moves into an interesting study of him as a preacher, pastor, prisoner, and author. In addition to a biographical evaluation of works such as *Pilgrim's Progress*, one entire chapter is given to Bunyan's poetic writings. Very readable. Recommended. (Baker, 1983, 186pp., \$5.95) —E.H.

EASTER ENIGMA
by John W. Wenham

A harmonization of the gospel accounts of Jesus' Resurrection is the most distinguishing feature of this volume. John Wenham challenges critical theology by his creative weaving of numerous details into his defense of the total reliability of the New Testament records. (Zondervan Publishing House, 1984, 162pp., \$6.95) —G.R.H.

FAMILY BOOKSHELF

AMY CARMICHAEL: LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME
by Lois Hadley Dick

Amy Carmichael, an example of living by faith, dared to attempt the impossible to save the abused, battered, and broken children of the temples of India. To save these "Jewels of the King" she set out, against the wishes

of her peers and the customs of the land in which she served, to build a place of rescue.

Though this is a biography, the author suggests a parallel between 1869 India and present-day America with its child abuse and child pornography. The unwritten question of the author is if Amy Carmichael, armed only with complete faith in her God, can accomplish the impossible of her day, where are the Amy Carmichaels that are needed today? A powerful book for those who care. (Moody Press, 1984, 160pp., \$3.95) —G.L.P.

THE HOLISTIC HEALERS: A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON NEW-AGE HEALTH CARE
by Paul C. Reisser, M.D., Teri K. Reisser, and John Weldon

At last, a book written by a medical doctor exposing the deceit practiced by doctors who claim to be holistic healers. Holistic health is gaining popularity in the world because it purports to treat the "whole person"—body, spirit, and mind. Much new-age medicine, the authors warn, is rooted in Eastern and occult mysticism and may be dangerous, not only to the physical but also the spiritual health of Christians. An excellent, well-researched book that should be read by every Christian tempted to experiment with new health care alternatives such as: acupuncture, acupressure, biofeedback, nutritional therapies, meditation, iridology, homeopathy, and others. (InterVarsity Press, 1983, 171pp., paper, \$5.95) —C.C.

BIBLE BASIC
by Bernard Bangley

For computer buffs and children of all ages Bernard Bangley, with the expert assistance of his son, has produced a delightful array of educational games in Bible Basic (Harper & Row). The games are given in BASIC language and compatible with most "PC's." With games such as "Jacob's Ladder," "Password: Shibooleth," "David & Goliath," "Which Book?" and many more, you and your family will be led into many hours of exciting entertainment while learning Bible truths. Even more important, it is a way to enhance family togetherness, to share, and have fun, and instill a desire to know God's Word in young hearts. (Harper and Row, 1983, 154pp., \$9.95) —D.M.