Beyond Megachurch Myths What We Can Learn From Americas Largest Churches

Beyond Megachurch Myths Scott Thumma 2007-08-10 Drawing on extensive, broad-based, and well-designed research, as well as stories and anecdotes, Beyond Megachurch Myths dispels popular myths about megachurches while highlighting the diversity within the megachurch phenomenon. Defining a megachurch as a Protestant church that averages at least 2000 total attendees in their weekend services, Scott Thumma and Dave Travis reveal what these churches are and are not, why they are thriving, what their members say about their experiences, and why they have many valuable lessons to teach smaller churches.

The Worship Mall Bryan D. Spinks 2012-02-01 Religion today is in competition with the leisure and entertainment industries. Gen Y, the postmodern generation, is open to spirituality, but most of today’s young adults have not been born into faith communities where they feel any lasting allegiance. Studies suggest that for the young, belief in God is an optional matter, a virtual consumer choice. As a result, different trends in worship and worship styles are offered by different churches to suit lifestyles, attitudes, and personal taste. In this comprehensive and lively survey, Bryan Spinks examines postmodern worship trends including hip hop, praise and worship songs, emerging worship, blended worship, the U2 Eucharist service, the Roman Catholic rethinking of Vatican II, contemporary Celtic worship, the Zaire Mass in Africa, liquid worship, Vineyard and Hillsong worship, the snake-handling holiness churches of the American south, and other emerging forms of alternative worship.

Sacred Subdivisions Justin Wilford 2012-11-19 In an era where church attendance has reached an all-time low, recent polling has shown that Americans are becoming less formally religious and more promiscuous in their religious commitments. Within both mainline and evangelical Christianity, it is common to hear of secularizing pressures and increasing competition from nonreligious sources. Yet there is a kind of religious institution that has enjoyed great popularity over the past thirty years: the evangelical megachurch. Evangelical megachurches not only continue to grow in number, but also in cultural, political, and economic influence. To appreciate their appeal is to understand not only how they are innovating, but more crucially, where their innovation is taking place. In this groundbreaking and interdisciplinary study, Justin G. Wilford argues that the success of the megachurch is hinged upon its use of space: its location on the postsuburban fringe of large cities, its fragmented, dispersed structure, and its focus on individualized spaces of intimacy such as small group meetings in homes, which help to interpret suburban life as religiously meaningful and create a sense of belonging. Based on original fieldwork at Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church, one of the largest and most influential megachurches in America, Sacred Subdivisions explains how evangelical megachurches thrive by transforming mundane secular spaces into arenas of religious significance.

High on God James Wellman Jr. 2020-01-10 “God is like a drug, a high, (I) can’t wait for the next hit.” This direct quote from a megachurch member speaking about his experience of God might be dismissed as some sort of spiritually-induced drug riff. However, according to the research in this book, it was not only sincere, but a deeply felt, and sought-after sensibility. Megachurch attendees desire this first-hand experience of God, and many report finding it in their congregations. The book focuses on the emotional, social and religious dynamics that pull thousands of people into megachurches and how those churches make some feel like they are “high on God” and can’t wait to get their next spiritual “hit.” High on God gives the first robust and plausible explanation for why megachurches have conquered the churchgoing market of America. Without condensation or exaggeration, the authors show the genius of megachurches: the power of charisma, the design of facilities, the training of leaders, the emotional dynamics, and the strategies that bring people together and lead them to serve and help others. Using Emile Durkheim’s concept of homos duplos, the authors plot the strategies that megachurches employ to satisfy the core human craving for personal meaning and social integration, as well as personal identity and communal solidarity. The authors also show how these churches can go wrong, sometimes tragically so. But they argue that for the most part, megachurch help their attendees find themselves through bonding with and serving others.

The Future of Mainline Protestantism in America James Hudnut-Beumler 2018-01-09 As recently as the 1960s, more than half of all American adults belonged to just a handful of mainline Protestant denominations—Presbyterians, UCC, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, and American Baptist. Presidents, congressmen, judges, business leaders, and other members of the elite overwhelmingly came from such backgrounds. But by 2010, fewer than 13 percent of adults belonged to a mainline Protestant church. What does the twenty-first century hold for this once-hegemonic religious group? In this volume, experts in American religious history and the sociology of religion examine the extraordinary decline of mainline Protestantism over the past half century and assess its future. Contributors discuss the demographics of mainline Protestants; their beliefs, practices, and modes of worship; their political views and partisan affiliations; and the social and moral questions that unite and divide Protestant communities. Other chapters examine Protestant institutions, including providers of health care and education: analyze churches’ public voice; and probe what will come from a diminished role relative to other groups in society, especially the ascendancy evangelicals. Far from going extinct, the book argues, the mainline Protestant movement will continue to be a vital remnant in an American religious culture torn between the competing forces of secularism and evangelicalism.

Hybrid Church Dave Browning 2010-08-20 A hands-on resource for both large and small churches It has been predicted that in the twenty-first century extremely large churches would emerge in America that resemble neither an elephant nor a field of mice. Which is better? At one time the answer would have been either/or. Now it’s both/and. We want both the intimacy of smallness and the impact of huge: we want a hybrid of the two. Hybrid Church is a practical guide for clergy and leaders who want to have the best of both church worlds: the intimacy of small “house church” groups and the impact of very large mega-churches. Offers a guide for churches who want to capitalize on their strengths to build intimacy with impact Written by the pastor of one of the “fastest growing” and “most innovative” churches in America with thousands of members

Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered-Wanjiru M. Gitau 2018-10-16 In this case study of Kenya’s Nairobi Chapel and its “daughter” Mavuno Church, Wanjiru M. Gitau offers analysis of the rise, growth, and place of megachurches worldwide in the new millennium. This engaging account centers on the role of millennials in responding to the dislocating transitions of globalization in postcolonial Africa and around the world, gleaning practical wisdom for postdenominational churches everywhere.

Handbook of Megachurches-Stephen J. Hunt 2019-11-26 The megachurch is an exceptional recent religious trend, certainly within Christian spheres. Spreading from the USA, megachurches now reached reach different global contexts. The edited volume Handbook of Megachurches offers a comprehensive account of the subject from various academic perspectives.

Kingdom Expressions J. D. Payne 2012-09-17 In our changing world how do Christians come together in non-traditional ways? An expert takes a look at some of the most significant gospel-advancing movements and trends to take place in the latter twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the United States. New Christian groups examined include: the Church Growth Movement, Missional Church Movement, Multisite Movement, the rise of church planting networks, the House Church Movement, and the Emerging Church Movement. Readers are introduced to each expression, along with important definitions, history, convictions, and influential leaders. Features include: A close look at non-denominational movements that reach new people for Christ Explanations of how contemporary Christianity is changing Concise guide to non-traditional Christian kingdom expressions along with important definitions, history, convictions, and influential leaders. Features include: A close...
American Religion—Mark A. A. Cheade 2017-08-29 The most authoritative resource on religious trends in America—now fully updated Most Americans say they believe in God, and more than a third say they attend religious services every week. Yet studies show that people do not really go to church as much as they once did, and they are not always clear what they mean when they tell pollsters they believe in God or pray. American Religion presents the best and most up-to-date information about religious trends in the United States, in a succinct and accessible manner. This sourcebook provides essential information about key developments in American religion since 1972, and is the first master resource of its kind to appear in more than two decades. Mark Cheade looks at trends in diversity, belief, involvement, congregational life, leadership, liberal Protestant decline, and polarization. He draws on two important surveys: the General Social Survey, an ongoing survey of Americans' changing attitudes and behaviors, begun in 1972; and the National Congregations Study, a survey of American religious congregations across the religious spectrum. Cheade finds that American religious life has seen much continuity in recent decades, but also much change. He challenges the popular notion that religion is witnessing a resurgence in the United States—in fact, traditional belief and practice is either stable or declining. Cheade examines why the decline in liberal Protestant denominations has been accompanied by the spread of liberal Protestant attitudes about religious and social tolerance, how confidence in religious institutions has declined more than confidence in secular institutions, and a host of other crucial trends. Now updated with data and a new preface by the author, this revised edition provides essential information about key developments in American religion since 1972, plainly showing that religiosity is declining in America.

Viral Churches—Ed Stetzer 2010-04-26 A groundbreaking guide for multiplying the impact of church plants Based on a study that was commissioned by the Leadership Network, this book reveals the best practices in church planting and uncovers the common threads among them. A much-needed resource, this book will inform, guide, and even catalyze today's many church planting leaders. The authors clearly show leaders how to plant churches that create a multiplication movement and offer inspiration for them to do so. The book addresses their questions about what to do next in their church planting strategies, in light of research on what's actually working best. Author Ed Stetzer heads up LifeWay Research Provides reliable, credible information about what church planting strategies work best A volume in the Leadership Network series Offers a definitive guide for church planting and the burgeoning movement it is part of.

The Religion Toolkit—John Morrelle 2011-09-15 This complete overview of religious studies provides students with the essential knowledge and tools they need to explore and understand the nature of religion. Covers the early development of religion, with overviews of major and minor religions from Islam to Scientology Considers recent developments including secularization; the relationship between religion and science; and scientific studies on religion, health, and mystical experience Uses humor throughout, allowing students to remain open-minded to the subject Explains what it means to study religion academically, and considers the impact of the study of religion on society Contains numerous student-friendly features including photos, maps, timelines, side bars, historical profiles, and population distribution figures Provides classroom users with a lively website www.wiley.com/portal/religionToolkit including questions, quizzes, extra material, and helpful primary and secondary sources.

A God More Powerful Than Yours—Christopher W. Boerl 2015-04-01 Throughout American history, God has been powerful forces capable of masterfully manipulating the political and social landscape of the nation. Key to the influence religious organizations have historically held in the United States is their use of communication technologies. In this vivid account, Christopher Boerl and Katie Donahvad adroitly illustrate how the various religious phenomena have had and the reactionary religious response which followed. Through shifting social and political realities, the religious leaders, the public, also describe the role the media has played in nurturing religious movements and fanaticism. Broadcast media in particular is identified as a unique conduit through which the now dominant, conservative articulation of Christianity both took root in the United States and survived as an important social force. More recently, new communication technologies, the Internet and social media, have suprised the reign of broadcast media. In so doing, these technologies are serving as a form of religious pluralization and theological fragmentation. In short, new communications technologies are fragmenting a once homogenous religious body, and, in so doing, proving that some gods are more powerful than others.

Living Large—Sarah Z. Wexler 2010-10-26 Supernovas has become an American way of life. We have XXL cars, homes, and waistlines. We built the world's tallest monument. We get the largest breast implants. We're home to the world's largest retailer, sports stadiums, and office building. But with the recession and our nation rising up to meet the problems of our daily lives, it has become impossible to ignore the effects on—our environment, finances, communities, and psyches—of going ever bigger. By turns funny and incisive, Living Large is a nation-spanning journey into the world of "extreme big." From North Way Community Church in Wexford, Pennsylvania (one of the 3,000 American megachurches), to Bloomington, Minnesota's, Mall of America (4.2 million square feet in size), from the Tiffany flagship store in Manhattan (where in the past two decades the average engagement ring diamond has nearly doubled in size), to Whittier, California (home of America's largest landfill), Wexler's firsthand reports on going for a breast enlargement consultation, trying to lift the world's largest ball of twine, getting lost in the country's largest hotel, talking shop with members of the Hummer Club of America are complemented by interviews with researchers, economists, business owners, critics, and consumers. Living Large offers a fascinating, thought-provoking look at a nation that's been supersizing for centuries but is now only coming to terms with its appetite for more.

Baby Boomers and Beyond—Amy Hanson 2010-06-29 How ministry leaders can help older adults be a vital part of Christian community With the explosion of question challenges for the Christian community. Amy Hanson challenges us to let go of many old stereotypes regarding aging and embrace a new paradigm that sees older adults as active, healthy and capable of making significant contributions. Debunks the myths of aging that keep us from fully embracing the potential of people in life's second half Offers suggestions on how to re-invent ministry with older adults Focuses on unleashing the power of the baby boomer population to strengthen and rejuvenate their congregations.

The Church, Then and Now—Stanley E. Porter 2012-10-26 The church is one of the most intriguing and significant institutions on earth. Because its essence and character are so widely misunderstood, this is a timely book. The church is not a mere human institution, though it is made up of human beings in community. Its roles and responsibilities are momentous, but all the elements of its organization came about as the church developed and attempted to fulfill its divine mandate, not as forms given at its founding. These papers from a Bingham Colloquium at McMaster Divinity College treat the church's "how" and "why" and show how the church's history offers us a lens through which to see the future of the church. The essays are divided into five parts: A New Study of the Church: The Church and New Testament History A New Study of the Church: The Church in the Early Modern Period A New Study of the Church: The Church in the Modern Period A New Study of the Church: The Church in the Contemporary Period A New Study of the Church: The Church in the Postmodern Period

American Religious History: Belief and Society through Time (3 volumes)—Gary Scott Smith 2020-12-07 A mix of thematic essays, reference entries, and primary source documents covering the role of religion in American history and life from the colonial era to the present. Often controversial, religion has been an important force in shaping American culture. Religious convictions strongly influenced colonial and state governments as well as the United States as a new republic. Religious teachings, values, and practices deeply affected political structures and policies, economic ideologies and practice, educational institutions and instruction, social norms and customs, marriage, and family life. By analyzing religion's interaction with American culture and prominent religious leaders and ideologies, this reference helps readers to better understand many fascinating, often controversial, religious leaders, ideas, events, and topics. The work is organized in three volumes devoted to particular periods. Volume one includes a chronology highlighting key events in the history of religion. These essays are followed by approximately 120 alphabetically arranged reference entries providing objective, fundamental information about topics related to religion in America. Each volume presents nearly 50 primary source documents, each introduced by a contextualizing headnote. A selected, general bibliography closes volume three. Timelines in each volume highlight key events in American religious history Some 30 essays survey broad themes central to American religious history Roughly 360 reference entries provide fundamental information about specific topics related to religion in American history Excerpts from around 150 primary source documents provide first-hand accounts of how religion has shaped American history Entry bibliographies and a selected, general, end-of-volume bibliography directly users to additional resources information

The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture—Wanda Rushing 2010-06-10 This volume of The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture offers a current and authoritative reference to urbanization in the American South from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first, surveying important southern cities individually and examining the various issues that shape patterns of urbanization from a broad regional perspective. Looking beyond the post-World War II era and the emergence of the Sunbelt economy to examine recent and contemporary developments, the 48 thematic essays consider the ongoing remarkable growth of southern urban centers, new immigration patterns (such as the influx of Latinos and the return-migration of many African Americans), booming regional entrepreneurial activities with global reach (such as the rise of southern banking), sprawl, aging and deteriorating infrastructure, gentrification, and state and local budget shortfalls. The 31 topical essays consider the ongoing remarkable growth of southern urban centers, new immigration patterns (such as the influx of Latinos and the return-migration of many African Americans), booming regional entrepreneurial activities with global reach (such as the rise of southern banking)

Sensational Devotion—Jill C Stevenson 2013-04-15 Sensational Devotion examines contemporary Passion plays, biblical theme parks, Holy Land recreations, creationist museums, and megachurches in order to understand how they serve their evangelical believer-users while also shaping larger cultural and national dialogues. Jill Stevenson explores how performative media support specific theologies and core beliefs by creating sensual, live experiences for those who use them. The book explores evangulical performance across a range of media and sites, including film, television, and new communications technologies, arguing that religious performance is fragmenting a once homogenous religious body, and, in so doing, proving that some gods are more powerful than others.

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television, theatre, tourist attractions, museums, and places of worship. Using historical research coupled with firsthand experiences, it critically examines these spaces and environments within their specific religious, cultural, and national contexts, while placing them within a long devotional tradition to suggest how they cultivate religious belief by generating vivid, sensual, affectively oriented, and individualized experiences. Stevenson’s analysis builds upon existing work on performance and cognition, as well as theories of affect, as it contributes to existing scholarship on American evangelicalism and evangelical Christian media.

The Divine Institution—Sophia Bjork-James 2021-03-12 The Divine Institution provides an account of how a theology of the family came to dominate a white evangelical tradition in the post-civil rights movement United States, providing a theological corollary to Religious Right politics. This tradition inherently enforces racial inequality in that it draws moral, religious, and political attention away from problems of racial and economic structural oppression, explaining all social problems as a failure of the individual to achieve the strong gender and sexual identities that ground the nuclear family. The consequences of this theology are both personal suffering for individuals who cannot measure up to prescribed gender and sexual roles, and political support for conservative government policies. Exposure to experiences that undermine the idea that an emphasis on the family is the solution to all social problems is causing white evangelicals to shift away from this narrow theological emphasis and toward a more socially justice-oriented theology. The material and political effects of this shift remain to be seen.

The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Volume V—Mark P. Hutchinson 2018-10-18 The five-volume Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions series is governed by a motif of migration (‘out-of-England’). It first traces organized church traditions that arose in Britain and Ireland as Dissenters distanced themselves from a state church defined by diocesan episcopacy, the Book of Common Prayer, the Thirty-Nine Articles, and Royal Supremacy, but then follows those traditions as they spread beyond Britain and Ireland—and also examines newer traditions that emerged downstream in other parts of the world from earlier forms of Dissent. Secondly, it does the same for the doctrines, church practices, services to state and society, attitudes toward Scripture, and characteristic patterns of organization that also originated in earlier British and Irish dissent, but that have often defined a trajectory independent of ecclesiastical organizations. The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Volume V follows the spatial, cultural, and intellectual changes in dissenting identity and practice in the twentieth century, as these once European traditions globalized. While in Europe dissent was often against the religious state, dissent in a globalizing world could redefine itself against colonialism or other secular and religious monopolies. The contributors trace the encounters of dissenting Protestant traditions with modernity and globalization; changing imperial politics; challenges to biblical, denominational, and pastoral authority; local cultures and languages; and some of the century’s major themes, such as race and gender, new technologies, and organizational change. In so doing, they identify a vast array of local and globalizing illustrations which will enliven conversations about the role of religion, and in particular Christianity.

Salvation with a Smile—Philip Luke Sinitiere 2015-11-13 Joel Osteen, the smiling preacher, has quickly emerged as one of the most recognizable Protestant leaders in the country. His megachurch, the Houston based Lakewood Church, hosts an average of over 40,000 worshipers each week. Osteen is the bestselling author of numerous books, and his sermons and inspirational talks appear regularly on mainstream cable and satellite radio. How did Joel Osteen become Joel Osteen? How did Lakewood become the largest megachurch in the U. S.? Salvation with a Smile is the first book devoted to Lakewood Church and Joel Osteen, offers a critical history of the congregation by linking its origins to post-World War II neopentecostalism, and connecting it to the exceptionally popular prosperity gospel movement and the enduring attraction of televangelism. In this richly documented book, historian Philip Luke Sinitiere carefully elaborates the life and times of Lakewood’s founder, John Osteen, to explain how his son Joel expanded his legacy and fashioned the congregation into America’s largest megachurch. As a popular preacher, Joel Osteen’s ministry has been a subject of political and cultural commentary. His influence is significant because of his strategic potential for growth, but also because the routines of religious innovation and political success. Sinitiere’s keen analysis shows how Osteen’s reluctance has expressed a pietist resistance that demonstrates evangelicalism’s fractured, but persistent presence. Salvation with a Smile situates Lakewood Church in the context of American religious history and illuminates how Osteen’s ministry has parlayed an understanding of American religious and political culture into vast popularity and success.

An Introduction to Ministry—Jan S. Markham 2016-01-05 An Introduction to Ministry is a comprehensive and ecumenical introduction to the craft of ministry for ministers, and priests that make up the mainline denominations in the United States. Ecumenically-focused, it offers a grounded account of ministry, covering i.e/2areas such as vocation, congregational leadership, and cultivation of skills for an effective ministry. Covers the key components of the M.Div. curriculum, offering a map and guide to the central skills and issues in training. Explores the areas of vocation, skills for ministry, and issues around congregational leadership Each topic ends with an annotated bibliography providing an indispensable gateway to further study. Helps students understand both the distinctive approach of their denomination and the relationship of that approach to other mainline denominations. Advocates and defends a generous understanding of the Christian tradition in its openness and commitment to broad conversation.

Engineering Earth—Stanley D. Brun 2011-03-19 This is the first book to examine the actual impact of physical and social engineering projects in more than fifty countries from a multidisciplinary perspective. The book brings together an international team of nearly two hundred authors from over two dozen different countries and more than eight thousand environmental, engineering, and social science. Together they document and illustrate with case studies, maps and photographs the scale and impacts of many megaprojects and the importance of studying these projects in historical, contemporary and postmodern perspectives. This pioneering book will stimulate interest in examining a variety of both social and physical engineering projects at local, regional, and global scales and from disciplinary and trans-disciplinary perspectives.

Black Megachurch Culture—Sandria L. Barnes 2010 This book identifies how church cultural components are created, developed, and used to educate and empower adherents, and whether and how these tools are associated with the historic Black Church. The book is particularly interested in how churches use cultural components and other tools from the cultural repertoire to instruct congregants to model success in word and deed. The book’s findings illustrate that Black megachurches strive to model success on various fronts by tapping into effective historic Black Church tools and creating cultural kits that foster excitement, expectation, and entitlement.

Megachurches and Social Engagement—Mark J. Cartledge 2019-06-07 This book explores the nature and significance of social engagement by megachurches using Anglican and African diaspora Pentecostal case studies. It describes the range of social engagement activities, offering explanations in terms of theological motivations and the influence of globalisation.

Secularization and Religious Innovation in the North Atlantic World—David Hempton 2015-05-05 In the early 20th century it became a cliché that there was a ‘God Gap’ between a more religious United States and a more secular Europe. The apparent religious differences between the United States and western Europe continue to be a focus of intense and sometimes bitter debate between the main schools in the sociology of religion. According to the influential ‘Secularization Thesis’, secularization has been an integral part of the processes of modernization in the Western world since around 1800. For proponents of this thesis, the United States appears as an anomaly and they accordingly give considerable attention to explaining why it is different. For other sociologists, however, the apparently high level of religiosity in the USA provides a major argument in their attempts to reject the Thesis. Secularization and Religious Innovation in the North Atlantic World provides a systematic comparison between the religious histories of the United States and western European countries from the eighteenth to the late twentieth century, noting parallels as well as divergences, examining their causes and especially highlighting change over time. This is achieved by a series of themes which seem especially relevant to this agenda, and in each case the theme is considered by two scholars. The volume examines whether American Christians have been more innovative, and if so how this far explains the apparent ‘God Gap’. It goes beyond the simple American/European binary to ask what is ‘American’ or ‘European’ in the Christianity of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and in what ways national or regional differences outweigh these commonalities.

Religion, Culture & Society—Andrew Singleton 2014-03-10 ‘The reader is taken on a global exploration of the forms and diversities of religions and their social and cultural contexts... It is up to the reader to make sense of the material provided within the book... It is also up to the reader to form their own attitudes and opinions to the issues raised within the book.’ - Gary Bouma AM, Minnash University “Tells how sociology of religion originated in the work of key nineteenth and twentieth century theorists and then brings the story into the present era of globalization, hybrid spirituality, and the Internet. Students of religion will find this an engaging and informative survey of the field.” - Robert Wuthnow, Princeton University “It considers the ‘big questions’ - What is religion? How is religion changing in a modern world? What is the future of religion? - and addresses them through tangible cases studies and up-to-date research. It is an excellent introduction to the varieties of religious life in the contemporary society. - Sylvia Collins-Mayo, Kingston University This is a rich and dynamic account of the varieties of religious life and the central issues in the sociology of religion today. It leads the reader through the key ideas and main debates within the field as well as offering in-depth descriptions and analysis of topics such as secularization, fundamentalism, Pentecostal Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, atheism, ‘The spiritual marketplace’, digital religion and new religions like Wicca. Emphasising religion as a global phenomenon, examining especially the ways in which globalization has had an impact on everyday religious life, Singleton has created an illuminating text suitable for students in a wide range of courses looking at religion as a social and cultural phenomenon.

The Commercial Church—Mary Hinton 2011-05-19 This book provides an accessible exploration of religious education and theology in the historic black church. The book then looks at two mega churches to determine their ecclesial structure and whether they are continuing the legacy.
and what the implications of their breach is for the US religious landscape.

Sexual Misconduct and the Future of Mega-Churches: How Large Religious Organizations Go Astray
By Glenn L. Starks
2013-03-07
Why have multiple mega-church leaders—Ted Haggard and Bishop Eddie Long, for example—committed acts of sexual misconduct? This book discusses the reasons in depth and examines how these acts are impacting the future of megachurches.

Prophetically Incorrect
By Robert H. Jr. Woods
2010-08-01
The Bible includes prophetic speech and at times the church and its representatives are called to speak prophetically. But in our media-saturated age when many claim to speak for God, how can we evaluate the avalanche of supposedly prophetic speech? What does it mean to truly be prophetic? And when Christians speak prophetically, how can they do so in a biblical and effective way? Using vivid examples, this book offers clear guidelines for creating, critiquing, and consuming popular media, as well as practical suggestions for faithful communication. It also helps readers think critically about communication technology. The book includes a foreword by Quentin Schultze and a preface by Clifford Christians.

The Diversity Paradox
By Jacob Jenkins
2013-11-22
In response to America’s declining sense of community, Central Community Church has prioritized the organized metaphor of “community.” Building upon forty-eight months of ethnographic fieldwork, this book explores particular ways in which the community metaphor was co-constructed by Central Community’s racially/ethnically diverse leaders and members as well as limitations and tensions that emerged from those efforts.

Predestination
By Peter Johannes Thuesen
2009-07-06
Predestination—the idea that God foreordains one’s eternal destiny—is one of the most fascinating and controversial doctrines in Christianity. In this groundbreaking history, the first of its kind, Peter Thuesen shows that the debate over predestination is inseparable from other central Christian beliefs and practices—the efficacy of the sacraments, the existence of purgatory and hell, the extent of God’s providential involvement in human affairs—and has fueled theological conflicts across denominations for centuries. The book ranges from New England Puritans to today’s megachurches.

Religion and American Cultures: Tradition, Diversity, and Popular Expression, 2nd Edition [4 volumes]
By Gary Laderman
2014-12-17
This four-volume work provides a detailed, multicultural survey of established as well as “new” American religions and investigates the fascinating interactions between religion and ethnicity, gender, politics, regionalism, ethics, and popular culture. • Comprises contributions from more than 100 top scholars covering a breadth of topics such as Día de los Muertos, Heathenry, Islam, Pentecostalism, roadside shrines, Sufism, Wicca, and Zen from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives • Provides thought-provoking insights into religion’s interactions with cultural backdrops throughout America, including in education, entertainment, the Internet, the environment, politics, and at home • Contains photographs and illustrations depicting a wide range of religious figures and activities as well as significant religious sites in the United States • Supplies an entire volume of primary source documents illustrating the religious diversity in American culture, including Cecil B. DeMille’s essay “The Screen as Religious Teacher” as well as more conventional materials on Christian Science, the New Age, and Buddhism.

Jazz and Christian Freedom
By Bradley K. Broadhead
2018-12-21
Contemporary Western society has a strange relationship with freedom. Unbridled subjective liberty and narrow fundamentalism pull away from each other in mutual loathing while sociological forces seek to manipulate both sides. The church needs to recover and reconstruct a theology of freedom to navigate between the perils of both extremes and to avoid being manipulated by these forces. Just as biblical figures are taught through parables and metaphors, this book uses jazz improvisation as an analogy for Christian freedom. Just as jazz improvisation relies on successfully navigating constraints such as the history and traditions of jazz, jazz theory, and musical instruments, so Christian freedom also relies on constraints such as the biblical canon, church history, theology, and the church itself. Through understanding the freedom jazz musicians enjoy in making music together, we can better understand how Christian freedom might be enacted in daily life. If Western churches discover and enact Christian freedom in a meaningful way, the songs that they improvise will be as siren calls to people in chains.

Jesus in History, Legend, Scripture, and Tradition: A World Encyclopedia [2 volumes]
By Leslie Houlden
2015-06-23
This multivociferous work contextualizes Jesus in religion and culture by bringing together articles on folklore, history, literature, philosophy, popular culture, and theology. • Offers hundreds of alphabetically arranged entries that detail the presence of Jesus in world civilization and creative works over the last 2,000 years, showing how religion informs world history and culture • Includes some 40 primary documents to provide firsthand accounts of the influence of Jesus on world history and culture • Presents an extensive selection of images to help students visualize key topics • Supports the Common Core State Standards by promoting critical thinking skills • Supports National Center for History in Schools (NCHS) content standards for world history, particularly those related to the origins and influence of Christianity: Era 3; Standard 3B; Era 4; Standard 4A; Era 5; Standard 2C; Era 6; Standard 2B

Better Together
By Jim Tomberlin
2020-08-04
Thousands of Protestant churches are perplexed by plateaued or declining attendance, while other congregations nearby thrive. Is there a way for them to combine forces, drawing on both their strengths, in ways that also increase their missional impact? In Better Together, Expanded and Updated: Making Church Mergers Work, church merger consultant Jim Tomberlin and award-winning writer Warren Bird make the case that mergers today work best not with two struggling churches but with a vital, momentum-filled lead church partnering with a joining church. This much-needed resource describes the range of mergers for strong, stable, stuck, and struggling churches. No matter what type of merger a church may be considering, the authors address key questions about the process: How can a merger help a church go forward? How will a merger process unfold? Where can a declining church find another congregation to join? What are the pitfalls that both pastor and congregation should avoid? How can “better together” lead to more, rather than fewer, life-giving, high-impact, reproducing churches? They provide a complete, practical, hands-on guide for church leaders of both struggling and vibrant churches, so they can understand the issues, develop strategies, and execute mergers for church expansion and renewal—ultimately, so they can reinvigorate declining churches and give them a “second life.” No matter what your motivation for merging your church with another—to begin a new church life cycle, cross racial lines, reach more people for Christ, multiply your church’s impact, or better serve your local community—Better Together will give you the tools you need to create a thriving new entity.

Between God & Green
By Katharine K. Wilkinson
2012-04-01
Despite three decades of scientists’ warnings and environmentalists’ best efforts, the political will and public engagement necessary to fuel robust action on global climate change remain in short supply. Katharine K. Wilkinson shows that, contrary to popular expectations, faith-based efforts are emerging and strengthening to address this problem. In the US, perhaps none is more significant than evangelical climate care. Drawing on extensive focus group and textual research and interviews, Between God & Green explores the phenomenon of climate care, from its historical roots and theological grounding to its visionary leaders and advocacy initiatives. Wilkinson examines the movement’s reception within the broader evangelical community, from pew to pulpit. She shows that by engaging with climate change as a matter of private faith and public life, leaders of the movement challenge traditional boundaries of the evangelical agenda, partisan politics, and established alliances and hostilities. These leaders view sea-level rise as a moral calamity, lobby for legislation written on both sides of the aisle, and partner with atheist scientists. Wilkinson reveals how evangelical environmentalists are reimagining not only the landscape of American climate action, but the contours of their own religious community. Though the movement faces complex challenges, climate care leaders continue to leverage evangelicalism’s size, dominance, cultural position, ethical resources, and mechanisms of communication to further their cause to bridge God and green.
Beyond Megachurch Myths: What We Can Learn from America's Largest Churches

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