

play, and a site for adult literacy programs, a free legal clinic (one of only five in the state), and a “Sip and Play” program where toddlers are supervised while parents gather for support. It also functions as a staging location for street fairs and car shows, to list only a few events.

The book also contains much helpful research data, a hospitality checklist, and dozens of illustrations of what both small and large congregations across the nation are doing to care for their neighbors and to carry out the Great Commission. One may have wished the author had attempted to find a major publishing house, but as we learn from the biblical accounts, sometimes stories of resurrection cannot wait.

Webster’s book shows that pastors can learn by reading the Bible, by following the Holy Spirit’s leading, and by implementing the advice of a mentor like McIntosh who brings mature guidance to the greater church. Placing these two books in the hands of church leaders will spark their imaginations and demonstrate a tried and true pathway to renewal.

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Todd M. Johnson and Cindy M. Wu. *Our Global Families: Christians Embracing Common Identity in a Changing World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015. 240 pp. \$22.99.

Reviewed by Beau K. Brewer. Beau earned a B.A. from the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma in Chickasha, Oklahoma, in 2005, a M.Div. in Evangelism in 2011, and a Th.M. in Islamic Studies in 2015 from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Beau will begin work on his Ph.D. in Evangelism and Missions this fall (2015), and he is the Administrative Assistant to the Dean of the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Todd M. Johnson is associate professor of global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. He is co-author of *The World’s Religions in Figures* (Wiley-Blackwell), co-editor of the *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh University Press), and co-author of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Oxford University Press). He also serves as director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity. Cindy M. Wu holds a M.A. in Religion from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and has served in church-planting contexts in China, Mexico City, Houston, and Boston.

In an effort to promote ecumenical even cross-pollination across the globe and in mission fields for the greater good of peoples on the earth, *Our Global Families: Christians Embracing Common Identity in a Changing World* seeks to examine the diversity of both our global human and global Christian families and the deep chasm between them that hinders the work of justice and peace. The authors agree that Christian denominations struggle to embrace the changing world surrounding them and have a very narrow scope of their Christian identity that creates conflict between the “so-called”

Christian family and the human family. They state, “This book is an attempt to address these divisions, especially from the point of identity” (xv).

The book is divided into four parts. Part one (chapters 1–3) draws the reader’s attention to the religious, social, and economic changes taking place globally (50). Part two (chapters 4–6) focuses on changes within the Christian identity as Christianity experiences a shift due to globalization. Part three (chapters 7–9) addresses the Christian family’s relationship with those who hold to a non-Christian worldview. Part four (chapters 10–11) introduces a new dialogue that examines how a global Christian identity can transform our “human families” through social justice and ministry (184).

This book does not have a clear thesis statement; rather, it offers a compilation of objective statements. The authors begin by introducing the reader to the global Christian families and the global human families. By relabeling the body of Christ and theoretically building a DNA strand linking every human being on earth, the authors try to establish a universal identity. The authors strip the face of Christianity down to basic biblical beliefs because of its internal mutability in ethnicities and languages (4).

Christianity is usually in some state of growth and decline; it has ebbed and flowed continually over the past 2000 years. Part one provides data to further explain the most recent shift in global Christianity from the global North to the global South. It demonstrates the expansion of Christianity on the continent of Africa, while North America and greater parts of Europe experience decline (4–11). Christianity is unprepared as a whole and not rightly postured to embrace the changes within the global Christian family and, therefore, will not be ready to engage the religious diversity associated with the global human family constituted by the 7.5 billion people across the earth (37–51).

Religious diversity characterizes the global human family. In chapter four, examples are given of how walls of division have been built within the body of Christ rather than unity within this macrocosm of diversity. The concerns about diversity in unity comes from their views that Christians struggle with the sin of disunity rather than recognize common foundational identity in the love of Christ (64). The book addresses the church’s need for acceptance of racial diversity within its global Christian family based on Ephesians 2:14.

In chapter five, an acknowledgment is made in this work of the shift towards inclusivity, the ideology that says that other religions or faiths have claims of equal value to the claims of the Bible. At this point in the book, the authors promote an “acceptance” of pluralities of religious identities (72). “Our hope for a common humanity lies to a great extent in accepting the pluralities of human identity and in learning to navigate these identities in the course of everyday lives” (72). Religious pluralism is found across the globe, and the major faiths and practices, to some extent, coexist.

A strong argument is made in chapter six, beginning with two principles—the *indigenizing principle* and the *pilgrim principle*, as set forth by Andrew F. Wall, pioneer professor in the academic discipline of World Christian Studies (96). “These principles guide us to a church that is different everywhere (by culture) and the same everywhere (by faith) (96). On these principles, some evangelical Christians would agree that local churches should contextualize to fit the local culture, but they would also say that churches should not sacrifice the truth of God’s Word and sound doctrine.

Extreme solidarity with other types of Christians and other religions creates havoc for evangelical Christians who hold to biblical inerrancy and the exclusive view taught by the Word of God, “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me’” (John 14:6, NASB). The difficulty of solidarity is the fear of compromising Christian conviction and the truth of God’s Word for the sake of community. The authors’ approach is based on their relational and ecumenical beliefs; they do not insist on renouncing core beliefs of Christianity, but rather they demonstrate an attitude of love and respect (119).

The design of their method calls for “faithful presence, God-centered initiative, and humble service to humanity... to change the world” (163). Good service alone will not win souls to Jesus. The Bible says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17, NASB). Their suggested plan for changing the world lacks a keen sense of evangelistic fervor, which is necessary for accomplishing the Great Commission and establishing a lasting cultural and faith change in a local or global sphere. The absence of the gospel witness of Jesus Christ in purely social and justice ministries is a concern that I have about this work.

The last part of this book takes a practical look at the global ministry needs that the Christian community can use to bring about change in both local and global ministry settings. The authors encourage social ministry and justice as the olive branch to foster peaceful and ecumenical cooperation for the greater good. Wu’s background and work in social ministry, creative advocacy, and justice is evident in the plea for change at the conclusion of this book. Her passion for the possible outreaches of the arm of the Christian community does have its appeal but will be rendered useless if soul winning through the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not included in such efforts.

This book raises many questions about denominational and ecumenical efforts to relate to the religious pluralist human society that is encroaching on Christianity today. The call to lower our egos and weapons of warfare and to become educated about other religions and Christian views in order to foster a mutual respect and right attitude based on the love of Christ is a centerpiece of this work. However, this work disappoints with

regard to a lack of genuine evangelism strategy that moves beyond being a good Christian role model, to reaching outside the culture and interfaith movements and extending the light of the Gospel to those lost in pervading darkness.

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Rainer, Thom. *The Unchurched Next Door*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. 272 pp. \$13.26.

Reviewed by Amy Nicholson Jones. Amy is a Ph.D. student in the Fish School of Missions and Evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Before her studies there, she served with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention as a Journeyman in Europe. She earned a Master of Arts in Missiology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary while working with multiple church plants and replants after Hurricane Katrina. Her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance was earned at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Thom Rainer (Ph.D., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is the president of Lifeway Christian Resources where he continues to write prolifically based on Lifeway's research. Before his tenure at Lifeway, he was the founding dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism at Southern Baptist Seminary and led the consulting firm, the Rainer Group. *The Unchurched Next Door* is based on an award-winning national interview survey of unchurched people by Rainer and a large team.

This work highlights who these "unchurched next door" are, why they do not regularly attend church, and how believers can connect with and persuade them to become active church members. Like all of Rainer's works, this book is written to a Baptist-American audience and assumes many of the polity, leadership, and cultural issues that are specific to that community. That is not to say that he assumes that is the only church or that Baptists should steal sheep from other denominations. It only means that Lifeway and Rainer are part of this community and feel primarily called to speak to this group. This book was refreshing in that the interviewees and interviewers depicted in the book were not part of the stereotypes that are often used in an "us versus them" mentality. On the contrary, the humanity of all parties involved was evident.

Like most church health works that successfully balance biblical precedent and sociological science, this work uses good missiology to promote ways to reach those who are not connected with the body. The most obvious missiological tool of this book is based on the Engel Scale, which reveals that not all unbelievers are in the same place spiritually. The Rainer scale, with rankings from U5 to U1, reflects how open a person is to the Gospel and church attendance.

Rainer gives a profile of each number on the scale, with U5 being antagonistic to church and U1 representing those who are ready and willing to go