

Earl Paulk's Church Being Sold

The Cathedral at Chapel Hill, built by Earl Paulk, is on the market for \$24.5 million.



[] The property of an Atlanta megachurch founded decades ago by Earl Paulk is on sale for \$24.5 million.

Listed this month, the campus of the Cathedral at Chapel Hill, well known for its neo-Gothic, 6,000-seat sanctuary, is one of the largest religious facilities currently available in the United States, said Matt Messier, a Florida broker and principal of CNL Real Estate Services of Orlando, Fla., according to *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

In recent years, membership at the Cathedral at Chapel Hill has declined from 10,000 regular attendees to roughly 1,000 after a series of sexual misconduct allegations against Paulk, 81. Current pastor D.E. Paulk, who grew up believing Earl Paulk was his uncle but recently learned he was his biological father, said the sale was triggered in part by the church's evolving mission to be inclusive of people of diverse religions and sexual orientations.

"As we have become a 'radically inclusive' church our need for space has lessened considerably ... If we were to preach an exclusive message we would need more space," D.E. Paulk told *Charisma*. "The mission of the Cathedral has not changed, only expanded to include all of God's creation—Christian, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist, gay, straight, etc."

D.E. Paulk, who also leads a group called the Pro-Love Organization, has advocated for gay rights in recent years and is an associate of the controversial preacher Carlton Pearson, who teaches that all people, not just Christians, are saved.

In his comments to *Charisma*, D.E. Paulk also alluded to universalism, saying the Cathedral does not seek to convert but to “convince everyone of Christ’s love.”

“We believe that Christ was successful, not a failure,” D.E. Paulk said. “Christ came to ‘reconcile the world to God,’ and we confess that Christ succeeded and ‘finished’ this work. If Christ was successful then the world was converted at Calvary. Salvation, then, becomes an awakening to God's free gift—not a conversion.”

Brandi Paulk, wife of D.E. Paulk and a pastor at the Cathedral, said the church property was valued at \$31 million two years ago, but the price was lowered because of the economic downturn. She told the *Journal-Constitution* that the facilities were not being sold to pay legal expenses related to civil actions involving Earl Paulk, who has been hounded by claims of sexual misconduct since he was accused of committing adultery in 1960.

In February, a judge dismissed the most recent action against Earl Paulk. The lawsuit filed by Mona Brewer and her husband, Bobby, alleged that Paulk coerced the woman into a 14-year affair. The couple and their attorney were ordered to pay more than \$1 million in legal fees. They are appealing the decision.

Although Earl Paulk remains archbishop of the church, he is not active in its daily operations.— **Adrienne S. Gaines**