Rick Warren - ON PURPOSE

Evaluating Rick Warren and the Purpose-Driven Church

Introduction

Under the influence of leaders who promote the book The Purpose Driven Life, millions across the world have gone through a *"40-day spiritual journey."* Knowingly or unknowingly they have become part of Rick Warren's "purpose" that he has for the world and the church. Of these "purposes" Christians must be made aware of.

Evaluating the underlying principle of "40-days"

On page 9 of *The Purpose Driven Life* Rick Warren says: "***Whenever*** *God wanted to prepare someone for his purposes, he took 40 days"* (My emphasis). He then goes on to give Biblical examples of how God changed people's lives in 40 days. He then invites people on his 40 days course and states: ***"The next 40 days will transform your life."*** (p.10). Is it true what he says? Let us examine each example that he uses from the Bible to illustrate his point (p.10).

"Noah's life was transformed by 40 days of rain" – untrue. Even before the flood the Bible declares: *"Noah was a* ***righteous man, blameless****... and walked with God* (Gen.6:9, My emphasis). Noah fulfilled God's will by preaching righteousness and by building an ark. The flood had to "transform" a sinful world, not Noah! If the *"40 days"* had an effect on him it must have been negative, for he came out of the ark, got drunk and lay naked! (Gen.9:21).

"Moses was transformed by 40 days on Mount Sinai" – untrue. What really transformed Moses' life was his encounter with God speaking from a burning bush! (Gen.3).He had to go up the mountain to receive the law. After his *"40 days"* he lost control of himself and by throwing them down on the ground, broke the tablets of stone on which God had written (Ex.32:19).

Also**, the spies were not sent into the promised land to be transformed**; they were sent in to spy out the land. Of the twelve who returned after 40 days, only two could enter; the other 10 died in the wilderness because of their unbelief (Num.14).

David was not transformed by Goliath's 40 day challenge. As a young boy, David learned to fight by defending his father's sheep against wild animals (1 Sam.17:34). Furthermore, it was after his "40 day" encounter with Goliath that he slept with another man's wife, and to make matters worse, also had him murdered (2 Sam. 11/12).

In the case of Elijah, it was not a meal and 40 days of traveling that gave him spiritual power. Even before his 40 days of traveling he was enabled by God to do those incredible miracles on Mount Carmel! (1 Kings 18).

In the city of **Nineveh's case,** it was not because they underwent a 40 day course that they changed, it was because God warned them that **after 40 days** the city would be destroyed and because **they believed God's Word and repented**! (Jonah 3:4,5).

Rick Warren again interprets Scripture erroneously when he says that Jesus was empowered by 40 days in the desert. Not true! The power of the Holy Spirit came

upon Him whilst being baptized in the river Jordan. It was **because** He had spiritual power and **because** He knew the Scriptures that He could resist the devil.
The disciples were not transformed because they waited for forty days. They were transformed and received spiritual power because the Holy Spirit came upon them on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
Every example he uses to illustrate his point is interpreted incorrectly. **There is no evidence from Scripture, especially from the New Testament, that God *"always"* uses 40 days to prepare someone for His purposes.**
Jesus, for example, spent three years preparing His disciples for their ministry. In Paul's case he had to spend years in the desert in order to be prepared for preaching (Gal.1:17,18).
If the 40 day principle is not Scriptural, what then is the purpose of the 40 day course presented in *The Purpose Driven Life*?

New Age Connections of *The Purpose Driven Life*

On September 11, 2001, as I sat watching the terrorists' attack on the Twin Tours in New York. I said to my friends that we were watching one of Satan's most strategic moves towards the New Age goal of uniting all the faiths of the world. This event was going to be a catalyst that would pave the way for the establishing of a false world peace. This is prophesied in God's Word: *"While people are saying 'Peace and Safety,' destruction will come on them suddenly…"* (1 Thess.5:3). Little did I know how prophetic my words would be. The next year, 2002, a book entitled *From the Ashes: A Spiritual Response to the Attack on America* was published. Articles by prominent Christian leaders like Billy Graham, Bruce Wilkinson, Charles Colson, Max Lucado, Bill Hybels, Jerry Jenkins, T.D.Jakes, and others, appeared next to articles written by well-known New Age leaders like Neale Donald Walsch, the Dalai Lama and even Starhawk, the witch. Amongst the Christian contributors was also a man called Rick Warren. New Age leader Neale Donald Walsch's article appeared just a few pages from the opening article of Bishop T.D.Jakes. Walsch challenged religious leaders of all faiths, including Rick Warren and every other Christian leader who had contributed articles in the book, to preach a ***"new gospel"*** **of** peace that ***"We are all one."*** This appeal was done in the light of what had happened on September 11, 2001. What an appealing message to a confused, terror-stricken world! One would of thought that at least some of the prominent Christian leaders represented in the book, would have spoken out publicly against Walsch's false gospel!

Intimidation

Rick Warren begins his book in a very intimidating way: "*This book is dedicated to you. Before you were born, God planned this moment in your life. It is no accident that you are holding this book."* I could say the same thing about this document of mine that you are now reading!
Would God promote a book full of things that do not agree with the truth of His Word? Would He endorse a book that quotes Eugene Peterson's *The Message* as if it is an authoritative Bible? Anyone reading *The Message* would see how clear meanings of Scripture are obscured and altered. For example, when the disciples asked Jesus about

His second coming and the end of the world, Peterson paraphrases Jesus' answer like this: *"Watch out for doomsday deceivers…"* (Matt.24:4,5). By exchanging *"let no man"* deceive you with *"doomsday deceivers"* he gives "scriptural" reason why anybody who warns people about the negative signs of the end times, should be regarded as a *"doomsday deceiver."* I would be included, because of the article that I am writing right now! On the other hand, false prophets and false teachers who enthusiastically promote false peace and unity amongst people of all faiths, would be accepted.

New Age - *"As above, so below; as below, so above"* in *The Message*

By quoting Colossians 1:16 from *The Message* right at the beginning of his first chapter, Warren immediately introduces his readers to the well-known New Age term of ***"above and below."*** This is what Ronald S. Miller and the editors of the *New Age Journal* have to say about this phrase: ***"As above, so below; as below, so above."***
"This maxim implies that the transcendent God beyond the physical universe and the immanent God within ourselves are one" (1. Deceived On Purpose, Warren Smith, Mountain Stream Press, p.29. My emphasis)

Rick Warren quotes from many different Bibles, but why does *The Message* get such a prominent place in his book? In *The Message* Peterson paraphrases the Lord's Prayer and substitutes *"in earth, as it is in heaven",* with *"as above, so below."* In Colossians 1:16 the commonly accepted *"heaven and earth"* found in most Bibles, is again translated by Peterson as *"above and below."* A quick Google search informed me of the meaning of this term: *"That which is above is the same as that which is below…The universe is the same as God, God is the same as man…" "Man is the counterpart of God on earth, as God is man's counterpart in heaven"* (2.www.themystica.com, Quotation from *The Emerald Tablet*). Nowhere could I find a Biblical reason why Eugene Peterson should use *"as above, as below"* as a translation for "*heaven and earth."* All the references I found showed that this term has an occultistic, New Age meaning.
Furthermore, one's suspicion that this book is promoting New Age agendas is confirmed by the fact that of all the Bibles Rick Warren could choose from to convey the meaning of Eph.4:6, he chooses *The New Century Version* which reads: *"He rules everything and is everywhere and is **in everything**",* (My emphasis, 3). A superficial look at the context will show that this is a wrong translation. Paul is writing to believers and exhorting them that *"there is one body, and one Spirit…one Lord, one faith…One God and Father of all, who is above all… and **in you all**"* (KJV, My emphasis). The context clearly shows that the ***"in all"*** (NIV), refers to the believers that he is writing to. The Bible does not teach that God is **in everything**; it teaches that God **is everywhere** (Omnipresent, Ps.139) and that He lives in reborn Christian believers. Many examples of words that reflect New Age spirituality can be found in *The Message*. Some of them are: "Oneness," "Presence" (implying the mystical, impersonal pantheist "presence"), "energies of prayer", "chanting", and "Master" (In Eastern religions the word "master" refers to men who, through reincarnation, have evolved into a holy state).
Why would Rick Warren choose to quote from a Bible that supports the New Age idea of *"We are all one"* and that God is in everything?

What would a seeking New Ager think when he is given *The Message* to read or Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life*?

Associations – Robert Schuller, Bernie Siegel, Gerald Jampolsky and Rick Warren

Bernie Siegel

On page 31 of his book Rick Warren makes reference to Bernie Siegel without giving any explanation as to who he is. He uses Siegel's name in the context of people who have hope and a sense of purpose in life. Who is Bernie Siegel? In his book *Love, Medicine & Miracles* Siegel describes how he, after being taught how to meditate, met an inner guide, George. This spiritual experience caused *"an incredible awakening"* for him, and George has been an *"invaluable companion"* to him *"ever since his first appearance"* (4). Since then Siegel has become a prominent proponent of New Age teachings and practices. Bernie Siegel's endorsement of Robert Schuller's book *Prayer: My Soul's Adventure with God* appears on the opening page (5). Why would a Christian minister like Rick Warren, who should care for the spiritual well-being of the sheep, quote somebody like Siegel?

Jerry Jampolsky

In his book *Teach Only Love*, psychiatrist Gerald Jampolsky, describes how a *"radical shift"* took place in his *"belief system"* after he had been brushed with a peacock feather and touched by the Indian guru Swami Baba Muktananda (6). Jampolsky is an ardent New Age proponent of "*A Course in Miracles*" in which statements like the following are made: *"The recognition of God is the recognition of yourself"* (7), *"There is no sin; it has no consequence"* (8). *"For Christ takes many forms with different names until their oneness can be recognized"* (9).
"Do not make the pathetic error of 'clinging to the old rugged cross' " (10), "…*For it teaches him* (man) *that, never having sinned, he has no need of salvation*" (11).
What has all this to do with Robert Schuller and Rick Warren?
In his book "*Deceived on Purpose*", Warren Smith reports the fact that Robert Schuller featured New Age leader Jampolsky on his "*Hour of Power*" television program and also presented "*A Course in Miracles"* at the Crystal Cathedral during the 80's.
After being confronted, a representative of Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral acknowledged involvement, but assured Warren Smith that they were no longer presenting the course (12). That was the situation in 1994. What was the situation at Crystal Cathedral like in 1999? The following is an excerpt from a transcript from "*Larry King Live*," Christmas Eve, 1999.

King: *"Tell us, Reverent Schuller…where you are…"*
Schuller: *"I've had a wonderful past few days…several meetings…three in his home…with the leading Muslim thinker and leader in the world, the Grand Mufti of the great mosque in Damascus…"*
King: *"The idea of bringing religions together, right?"*

Schuller: "*Absolutely…I have seldom met a man with whom I felt an immediate kinship of spirit and agreement of faith and philosophy quite like I have with the Grand Mufti of faith…"*
In this conversation we can clearly see how the *"We are one"* philosophy of the New Age Movement has had an effect on what Robert Schuller believes. Are Islam and Christianity the same faith? Allah does not have a son called Jesus, and moreover, Muslims deny the deity of Jesus Christ. Yet, Robert Schuller is the man who had a profound impact on the life and ministry of Rick Warren.

The Robert Schuller – Rick Warren Connection

Rick Warren and his wife attended and graduated at Schuller's Institute for Successful Church Leadership (13). In his program *Hour of Power* Robert Schuller had the following to say about Rick Warren: ***"And there's Rick Warren, a pastor who today is phenomenal.* He came to our institute time after time. And in 'Christianity Today', his wife was quoted as saying: 'When we came to that institute, we were blown away.'** " **(Robert Schuller, Hour of Power, April 4, 2004).** (14).
In a feature story on Rick Warren in the November 18, 2002 issue of *Christianity Today* Tim Stafford wrote that Warren's wife Kay said: **"Schuller… won them over…He had a profound influence on Rick…"** (15).
The "we are one" influence of Robert Schuller can clearly be seen in the fact that Rick Warren is on the Religious Advisory Council of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation (16). . On this their website the following mission statement appears: *"The Tony Blair Faith Foundation aims to promote respect and understanding about the world's major religions and show how faith is a powerful force for good in the modern world."*

Rick Warren's P.E.A.C.E. Plan for the World

*"Our Father in heaven Reveal who you are. **Set the world right"*** (Introduction to the Lord's Prayer; from the *The Message*, which is often quoted from by Rick Warren (pp.21,22; My emphasis).
Rick Warren authoritatively declared that God was going to use *"all of us"* to change the world. On November 2, 2003, he announced his 5-step P.E.A.C.E. Plan for the world. He said that the "*forces"* in the churches around the world would be mobilized to eradicate *"Gaint"* problems like *"pandemic diseases, extreme poverty, illiteracy, corruption, global warming, and spiritual emptiness"* that afflicted billions of people all over the world. Originally the P stood for "Planting churches", the E for "Equipping Leaders, the A for "Assisting the Poor", the C for "Caring for the Sick", and the E for "Educating the Next Generation." Later however, before an audience and panel of representatives of the world's religions he changed the P for "Planting Churches" to "Promoting Reconciliation." Warren also stated that the problems of the world could not be solved *"without including people of faith and their religious institutions"* (World Economic Forum, Davos, Switzerland, 24/1/2008). His shift to an ecumenical approach is contrary to what the Bible says. We are not to be *"unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness "* (2 Cor.6:14,15).
T.A.McMahon of *The Berean Call* reports that Warren told his Davos religious audience

that he was not concerned about their motivation in doing good , *"as long as you do good"* (17). (See Transcrip: *Rick Warren answers the Davos questions,* posted 25 January,2008,You-Tube).

The Message of *The Message*

Why does Rick Warren give such a prominent place to *The Message* in his book? Is it because the distorted meanings of Scripture support his unbiblical agenda of "saving" the world? For instance, the well-known verse, *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world…"* (Joh.3:17, NIV) is translated in *The Message* to say that Jesus *"came to help, to put the world right again."* The true meaning of Scripture is once again altered because the context clearly shows that Jesus came to save souls from judgment, not to put the world right! The ecological vision of the Green Movement is also promoted by the addition of the adjective "green" to Romans 15:13: *"Oh! May the God of green hope fill you with joy..."*

Master Jesus

Anyone who knows something about Eastern religions and New Age mysticism, will know what an important role the "masters" play in their beliefs and philosophies. A master is a teacher or a guide that has been purified by evolving through many incarnations. In most eastern religions Jesus is accepted as but one of many masters. In *The Message* the word "master" appears over 400 times and the New Age phrase "Master Jesus" 76 times! The same phrase is used in the New Age Bible, *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus Christ*. The following two verses are but examples of many that can be cited: *"Then some of the men from Cyprus and Cyrene who had come to Antioch started talking to Greeks, giving them the Message of the Master Jesus"* (Acts 11:20). *"The grace of the Master Jesus be with all of you"* (Rev.22:20-21). Some of the other New Age code words that appear in *The Message* are *"oneness,*" the mystical, impersonal pantheist *"Presence*", "*energies of prayer*" and "*chanting*." Right at the beginning of the first chapter of his book Rick Warren introduces his readers to the well-known New Age term *"above and below."* This he does by quoting Colossians 1:16 from *The* Message, where *"heaven and earth*" is substituted with "*above and below*." This "Bible" fits in comfortably with the plans of Rick Warren and the other New Agers. Their plans are well summarized in the words of Brian McClaren, another prominent leader in the Emerging Church Movement: *"I think our future will require us to join humbly and charitably with people of other faiths – Muslims, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, secularists, and others – in pursuit of peace, environmental stewardship, and justice for all people…"* (18). Also reported in The Berean Call-Extra, The Theft of Hope- The Emerging Church and Missions, Nov.2008).

Another Eastern Link

Rick Warren refers to the book *Sacred Pathways* in which Gary Thomas identifies nine ways in which people can draw near to God, namely: *Naturalists* by getting out into natural settings, *Sensates* love God with their senses, *Taditionalists* draw nearer to God

through their rituals and unchanging structures, *Ascetics* through solitude, *Activists* through confronting evil, battling injustice and working to make the world a better place, *Caregivers* through meeting the needs and loving others, *Enthusiasts* through celebration, *Contemplatives* through adoration and *Intellectuals* by studing with their minds. He then says: *"God wants you to be yourself"* (19). To justify his statement he again quotes from <u>*The Message*</u>, and again another mistranslation. John 4:23 is translated to read: *"That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in worship"* In other Bibles it is stated that God is looking for people that will worship Him in *"spirit and truth."* What a difference in the two translations! Amongst the nine ways through which God can be approached not a word is mentioned about the Biblical truth of entering the Presence of God the Father through **faith** in the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ (Heb.11:6). In fact,some of the ways mentioned by Warren directly contradicts the verse of Scripture which says: *"We live by faith, not by sight"* (2 Cor.5:7). In this same book, <u>*Sacred Pathways*</u> from which Rick Warren quotes, Gary Thomas instructs his readers to do the following: *"Choose a word, Jesus or Father, **for example**, as a focus for contemplative prayer. Repeat the word silently in your mind for a set amount of time, say **twenty minutes**, until your heart seems to be repeating the word by itself…"* (My emphasis), (20). Jesus taught: *"But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do…"* (Matt.6:7, KJV). This mantra form of praying, repeating a word over and over, is copied from the heathen religions of the East and can lead to self-hypnosis and to the opening of the mind to the influence of demonic spirits.

Prophecy

Rick Warren does not seem to think that Bible prophecy is important. He twists Scripture by implying that Jesus felt the same. He writes: "*When the disciples wanted to talk about prophecy, Jesus quickly switched the conversation to evangelism …He said in essence, 'The details of my return are none of your business' "* (p.285). This is just another example of the shocking inaccurate and irresponsible way in which he treats Scripture! **"*None of your business?"*** Has he ever read Matthew 24 and what Jesus had to say about false prophets in the end times? It does not seem so! No wonder he is so prone to deception. Scripture declares that " *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy* (Rev.19:10).

Signing of Covenants!

In spite of Jesus warning against the making of oaths or swearing to keep promises, Rick Warren encourages his readers to sign three types of covenants! At the beginning of the book readers must sign a covenant with him, then on page 151 readers are encouraged to sign a covenant with their cell group and on page 167 he describes how members of the Saddleback Church sign a covenant with their church, not to remain faithful to Christ and His Word, but to protect the church's unity. In contrast Jesus said: *"Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes', and your 'No' be 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one"* (Matt. 5:33-37). This verse speaks for itself! Any person who signs a covenant, disobeys Jesus' command not to swear. Signing a covenant to promise to protect the unity of the church?

What about the false doctrines that so many of the churches who do Rick Warren's course, teach? Paul, in contrast to Rick Warren, wrote to the Corinthians: *"No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval"* (1 Cor.11:19).
Rick Warren encourages people to just put their faith in Christ, but does not emphasize that repentance is a necessary ingredient of the gospel to be saved. His forty days course does not teach members of churches to be more faithful to Biblical truth, but instead indoctrinates them to be more submissive and loyal to the church system they belong to, regardless of false doctrines. This disregard for doctrinal truth makes it possible for churches of all kinds to come together in "unity" and will eventually play right into the hands of the false Christ that will arise to deceive the nations. It has been reported that more than 500,000 churches of all denominations from all over the world have partnered with Rick Warren to help solve the world's problems. Millions of copies of his books have been sold around the world. It is no wonder that Rick Warren refers to the church as a *"force."* Numerically speaking, the emerging church has really become a *"force"* to be reckoned with. It is no co-incidence that Rick Warren wrote the foreword to a book written by Erwin McManus entitled: *An Unstoppable Force: Daring To Become The Church God Had In Mind*. Here again, just like in TPDL, we have the use of the word *"force,"* a distinct code word which is commonly associated with New Age spirituality. Rick Warren uses the same word when he asks: *"What is the driving **force** in your life?"* (p.27, My emphasis).

Conclusion

Warren's attempt to solve the world's problems is a misguided scheme and because it ignores Bible prophecy concerning the end times, is playing right into the hands of antichrist forces who want all to be part of the *"We are one"* universal faith movement. Those who promote the *The Purpose Driven Life* should take heed of the warning: *"A little leaven, a slight inclination to error, or a few false teachers, leavens the whole lump, perverts the whole conception of faith"* (Gal.5:9, Ampl. Bible).
I believe our citizenship is in heaven and we eagerly await Christ's return, who by His power, will restore and bring everything under His control (Phil.3:20-21).

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Article on evaluating *The Shack* also available.

Endnotes

1. Smith Warren, *Deceived On Purpose*, Mountain Stream Press, Magalia, CA, p.29.
2. http://*www.themystica.com/mystica/articles/as below,above, html.*
3. Warren Rick, *The Purpose Driven Life*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p.88.
4. Smith Warren, *Deceived On Purpose*, Mountain Sream Press, Magalia, CA, p.47.

5. Ibid., p.55.
6. Ibid., p. 43-44.
7. Ibid., p.88-89.
8. Ibid., p.67.
9. Ibid., p.88-89.
10. Ibid., p.88-89.
11. Ibid., p. 88-89.
12. Ibid., p.67-69.
13. *www.cephas-library.com/purpose driven/robert schuller's long influence.html*
14. Smith Warren, *Deceived on Purpose,* Mountain Stream Press, Magalia,CA, p.103.
15. Stafford Tim, *Christianity Today,* November 18, 2002.
16. www.tonyblairfaithfoundation.org
17. McMahon T.A., *The Berean Call*, November 1, 2010.
18. *www.episcopalcafé.com The Berean Call*, The Theft of Hope – The Emerging Church and Missions,2008.
19. Warren Rick, *The Purpose Driven Life,* Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan,p.103.
20. *www.lighthousetrailsresearchproject.com newsletter060908.htm*