

The Purpose-Driven Presidency

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Dear Friends,

We realize that this e-mail is coming soon after our previous one, ***God Requires Love, Not Tolerance***. We also confess that we enjoy sleep as you do! But, when the Spirit of our Lord keeps us up praying through the night and prompts us to rise long before dawn to write, we do it! So, here is another **Prophetic Insight** for you to prayerfully consider.

For several years now we've been contacted by various people who've been deeply concerned about Rick Warren's books, *The Purpose-Driven Church* and *The Purpose-Driven Life*. Because of recent communications prompted by President Obama's request for Rick Warren to do the Inauguration invocation, we felt our Lord wanted us to warn ALL of you. Rick Warren founded Saddleback Church in Southern California and for many years has been leading the way in today's **Church Growth Movement**.

To better understand the connection between President Obama and Rick Warren, we first need to review some American history. Prior to the Great Depression of the 1930s there had been other economic depressions in this nation. With each of these financial calamities the President would call for a period of fasting and repentance until God delivered them from the condition that had been brought on by their sins. These disasters followed a pattern similar to that found in the Book of Judges: widespread toleration for sin, God's judgment that brought about repentance, and His subsequent merciful deliverance.

With the Great Depression of the 1930s, however, this pattern was broken by then-President Franklin Roosevelt. Refusing to yield to the humility of heart that had impelled his presidential forefathers, Roosevelt replaced the God of the Bible with the **'god' of government**. Because the government can print as much money as it wants — even without the means to back it up — Roosevelt instituted far-reaching social programs that borrowed money from the future. The plan *seemed* well and good. People could get out of their current crisis by placing the financial burden on their children and their children's children. Decades of borrowing from future generations became an entrenched policy, so much so that current generations have come to expect the entitlements of their greed-based, self-serving prosperity.

Commonly accepted practices that ignore or defy God's Word cannot prosper. Such is the case of robbing the yet-unborn to satiate their parents: ***"Children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children"*** (2 Corinthians 12:14). The ways of the world are utter foolishness to our holy God, who grieves the murdered 50 million aborted children who could have helped pay this debt. We previously wrote that when Roosevelt instituted the Social Security program, there were 17 workers to provide the funding for each retiree. Now there are only 2.5. Nobody is going to pay this debt back, NOBODY.

For the sake of greed we've doomed our children to economic chaos. Most Americans today share a common desire that aptly depicts the self-centered focus of this culture: a fervent desire that the total collapse of this nation and its economy won't happen in their lifetime! Yet how despicable in God's sight is this narrow-minded perspective!

It is evident that President Obama is a *purpose-driven man*. Americans expect this trait if he is to lead them out of the current crisis. While being *purpose-driven* may be admirable, that characteristic falls into deception when it gives way to the pathway of Rick Warren (and many others in the Church Growth Movement). What do these two men have in common? Both set aside the holy commands of God's Word to advance their own agenda.

This President has imitated the man-powered approach of FDR and set aside the humility of repentance that presidents of previous generations called for. Rather than calling for national repentance, President Obama is going to rely on the **'god' of government** to solve the current crisis. As driven as he is to get this nation out of its economic mess, no man's purpose can stand against God's as He challenges the idols of **government, greed and religion.**

Religion: Purpose-Driven Man's Testimony To His Own Success

The real key to the success of Rick Warren and the Church Growth Movement of which he is a key leader is to persuade people to set aside Biblical absolutes and agreeably tolerate everyone and everything. That means *never confronting people* with the depravity of their sin and their absolute need for Jesus as their Savior and the Lord of their lives. Meeting earthly felt needs and providing emotional satisfaction underlies the success of Saddleback Church and those modeled after it.

The Purpose-Driven Church and The Purpose-Driven Life distort God's Word by removing any emphasis on the reality of sin and man's carnal nature, making "Christianity" palatable. God's love is never balanced with His holiness. His command for righteousness is overridden by a call to accept sin and welcome all as accepted, even those who have no concept of repentance or guilt or righteousness. That way, "customers" — unbelievers and seekers — are attracted into pews, never confronted by their sin and never made to feel that repentance is needed to come into God's holy Presence.

We encourage you to go to <http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/2003/1-purpose.htm> and find a thorough exposé of Warren's goals and methodologies. Why are we recommending this? Warren's rules for church growth instruct us to "never criticize what God is blessing." That sounds right — as far as it goes. But the God Who is holy, righteous and just is deceptively cloaked by a representation of a deity who accepts everyone just as they are, without confession of their own depravity and without turning from that darkness into the light of His Lordship. Warren teaches that God Himself is so tolerant that He blesses everything and everyone. Much of Warren's goals and methods are derived from Peter Drucker and Robert Schuller. Both deny God *as He is represented in the Scriptures*, choosing instead to promote "people-friendly" policies and programs that define as acceptable even that which nullifies God's Word.

Peter Drucker is the legendary management guru behind many of today's corporate success styles, and in recent decades, has deeply influenced those who ascribe to the Church Growth Movement. What is attractive about Drucker's methodology is that it offers statistical proof of "success" — you can count nickels and noses as a sign of your accomplishment. Also, Drucker emphasizes the need for compromise and tolerance in order to produce a sense of community. Clergy from many nations have implemented Drucker's marketing approach to "doing church", finding that a promise of salvation without identifying with the self-denying cross of Christ produces far greater favor and acceptance.

The other person who has strongly impacted Warren's ministry is Robert Schuller of Crystal Cathedral fame. Warren incorporated Schuller's "people-pleasing" methods to produce the phenomenal growth at Saddleback. Both Warren and Schuller distort Scripture by quoting only passages or even partial verses that emphasize only the "loving side" of God. By eliminating emphasis on the holiness and righteous justice of God, they effectively remove any holy fear of Him and His chastisement and judgment when man continues to violate His standards.

This combined influence of Drucker and Schuller on Warren focuses on the "customer's perspective" in order to achieve success. This means you do whatever it takes so that people *feel satisfied* — the same approach that Corporate America relies on to entice people to *come and buy*. As evidenced by their expansive congregations, Schuller and Warren realized that when this process is applied, they're *successful* — that is, if success is measured by vast numbers of satisfied "customers".

Through surveys, congregational leaders can easily discover the "felt needs" of the unbelievers in their local community. Armed with this information, they can then develop services that attract "customers." Yet grievously, those who are lured in and deceived through this methodology are not exposed to the unchanging standard and requirements of God's Word. Rather, they're inoculated against the authentic Gospel by the passages they find palatable *instead of* being taught the rest that's not so pleasing to their flesh!

In Lifebyte 61, *Does Your Marriage Reflect Your Covenant With Our Father? (Lesson 1)*, we asked you to discuss your own view of the Bible and its veracity and absolute authority in the life of a Jesus follower. If you've prayerfully done this, then you've discovered God's perspective: **The entire Bible** is His inerrant and authoritative Word to guide you into a life that pleases Him. He has given His beloved children His Spirit to empower them to live in trusting obedience to His Word *out of love for Him*. Anyone who chooses to truly follow Jesus can never alter God's holy Word. Those who disguise His Word to make it more palatable to the sin nature open themselves to Satan's deception, as those of the Church Growth Movement have done. Deceiving themselves as well as others, they have blurred the line between what *God* calls right and wrong.

Our Lord Jesus confronted the religious leaders of His day for doing this very thing to the Word of God: **"Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?"** (Mark 12:24). They did not understand the power of God to change the hearts of people, so they altered His Word to suit their own purposes. This is what is behind the Church Growth Movement today...

To undergird their devious methodology, leaders of the Church Growth Movement needed an erroneous translation of the Bible that supported their own deception. Eugene Peterson met their needs when he wrote **The Message**. His translation of the Newer Testament in particular is blasphemous in its alteration of the truth! Yet, this version is frequently cited as a proof text by Rick Warren and many other Church Growth clergy.

Through the paraphrased conversational style of **The Message** which glosses over the truth, Warren avoids the convicting Scriptures that would offend his "customers." Like Peterson, he goes through great pain to de-emphasize Biblical absolutes, readily watering down the holy commands of a righteous God. Why? Because the absolutes of holiness and righteousness in the lives of those who would truly follow Jesus only hinder Warren's goal of *community at all cost* — the same goal and methodology that are behind the entire Church Growth Movement.

We are living in the times Paul was warning about, times in which people refuse to hear the truth. Rather, they want a "gospel" in which their worldly desires can be appeased even as they're deceived into believing they're acceptable to God:

"For there will be a time when they will not bear with sound teaching,
but according to their own lusts they will heap up for themselves
teachers who tickle their ears;
on one hand they will turn their ears away from the truth,
and on the other hand they will be turned aside to myths"
(2 Timothy 4:3,4, literal translation).

In light of Paul's admonition, look at an example of Peterson's "people-friendly" translation of Matthew 18:15-17:

"If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you've made a friend. If he won't listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won't listen, tell the church. If he won't listen to the church, you'll have to start over from scratch, confront him with the need for repentance, and offer again God's forgiving love.

Examine this passage in your own translation. You confront a follower of Jesus over *his sin*, not because your feelings are hurt! This isn't a personality issue, it's a matter of him recognizing his sin and repenting. That's the loving command of Christ — to restore the fellowship of the one who has sinned with both Himself and with those in His family. It's because of our *Lord's holiness* that He commands us to *remove the unrepentant from your midst*.

Our Lord clearly understood the need for **communal righteousness**, which is lost to the purpose-driven clergy of today. An accurate translation of the above passage commands the faith community to remove the unrepentant person in order to maintain communal righteousness. They were not *against* the unrepentant person, rather they were *for* the righteousness that resulted in their prayers being answered and our Father receiving testimonies of praise to His faithfulness. The one who continues in disobedience yet stays within the congregation could tempt others to stray, and would allow his unrighteousness to defile communal worship.

From our Lord's perspective, *upholding His holiness* is far more crucial than a man-propelled desire to be "people-friendly." Lord Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of His day because their hearts were *far from Him*, having substituted manmade teachings for the *unchanging commands of God* (Mark 7:6-8). Other examples of Peterson's gross distortion of God's holy Word in *The Message* can be found at this website: http://www.crossroad.to/Bible_studies/Message.html.

The Hebraic Restoration is Obedience-Driven, not Purpose-Driven/Outcome-Based

We've shared often that if we're to align our *motives* with those of the early, faithful followers of Jesus, we must be **obedience-based**, not **outcome-based**. This means that you must seek the will of God as to what HE wants you to do — the factor that Lord Jesus says identifies us as His brother, sister, and mother (Mark 3:35). You can't just envision some outcome you think is good and then ask Him to bless it. It's our Lord's will, *His outcome* that He's calling you to pursue. Being obedience-based means you daily seek the *rhema* of God for His specific will for you, then follow through in the power of His Spirit (Deuteronomy 8:3; Luke 4:4). Being obedience-based leads you to embrace the "altar experiences" our Lord uses so that you can continue to rid yourself of the motivations of your sin nature and take on the character of Jesus. As you hunger to become more like your King and Lord, you find that you're increasingly more willing to lovingly obey His every command.

In contrast, a self-focused, purpose-driven motivation has taken over much of western Christendom. Because of its popularity and great acceptance, many religious leaders, worship leaders, and Christian publishers and music producers have become outcome-based and purpose-driven using Warren's standards. By embracing and promoting a self-created outcome, they can freely adopt the ways of the world to accomplish their goal. They become *peddlers* of the things of God, using **marketing** as the means to carry out the will of God. But, anytime a worldly method or goal is adapted to gain a preconceived outcome, the unalterable holiness of the Word of God is forfeited. Paul recognized the widespread evil practice of "Christian" marketers and contrasted their insincerity with the holy motivation of serving God's purpose: ***"For we are not, as so many, peddling the Word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ"*** (2 Corinthians 2:17). An obedience-based follower of Jesus comes *from God* to share what *God has given Him*.

In the preceding verses Paul affirmed the importance of being **obedience-based** — of fully representing Jesus as He is presented in the Bible. No matter what the cost, we are to live as the representation of the Biblical Christ and His Word. Neither can be altered for marketability to those who are bent on hell:

"For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life..."

(2 Corinthians 2:15,16a).

To Be Obedience-based You Must Stay Repentance-Driven

Many of you out of Spirit-impelled obedience to your beloved Lord have had to flee Church Growth Movement congregations. You've been branded by them as "intolerant", "troublemaker", "unloving." We want to encourage you. Press on into pursuing a life that's pleasing to our Lord Jesus, and know that you're in good company! Deceived mega-congregations try to get you to discard the unalterable foundations of God's Word so that you'll find unity in joining a worldwide marketing movement. But this flesh-appeasing deceit is a dangerous snare that opposes Biblical faith. Rather, we urge you to continue to uphold personal and communal righteousness with those who are abiding in love and repentance in His Spirit, even if that's currently just a few in your relational arena. We'll be writing more about this soon...

As we noted in our last e-mail, those who are walking in this deception don't need to be forcefully combated. They need the prayers of righteous people whom our Father will answer, since He is powerful enough to change the heart of anyone! And, while you're praying, would you please lift up the two of us before His Throne? Even as our Lord has called us to expose these demonic forces, we're facing tremendous opposition, both physically and on our equipment. Please, pray for us...

Mike & Sue

P.S. Have you ever thought about this? What if God could find *10 righteous people* in each city in this nation. He was willing to stop His destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18) if 10 could be found, and their societies were certainly no worse than ours. Do you think there are 10 righteous people in each city in the US? Would you be one of those whose prayers and obedient, loving trust would stir Him to relent?

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