



Spirit-Led or Purpose-Driven?

by Berit Kjos (www.crossroad.to)

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http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/04/pied_pipers_of_purpose.htm

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Spirit Led ??

PART 1...

"There are some really good things and points that Rick Warren brings out. But they always seems to be mixed with so many confusing and theologically weak points that you go crazy trying to keep it all straight. You will read a great point and then he'll throw in a quote from Mother Theresa or Aldous Huxley and your mind reels. There's a push to paint God as a smiley face in the sky - but you have to ignore His justice and anger! Plus, when you are the only 'naysayers' in a group it gets old - especially when no one else seems to have anything but praise for the book." *David, a visitor to our website.*

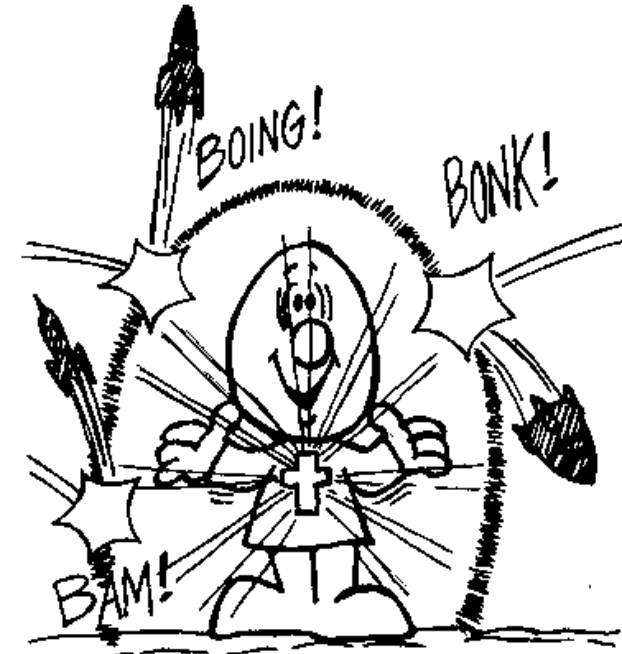
"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: **"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.**" For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; "and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. "But you **be watchful in all things...**" 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Our website began to receive requests for information about *The Purpose Driven Life* last year. So Andy and I bought the book, read it quickly and were troubled by some of its claims, promises and paraphrased "Bible" references. But we also found many true and encouraging pages. Since we didn't want to criticize Rick Warren or confuse those who apparently were helped by his book, we left it on the shelf.

By this fall, Rick Warren's manual on the Christian life had become the topic of discussion in churches around the world. The letters from concerned visitors multiplied. After reading the book again, we could no longer ignore its subtle distortions, its half-truths, its conflicting messages or its pragmatic permissiveness: if it works (i.e. brings people into the church), it's okay! "God loves variety!" [2]

Nor could we accept Pastor Warren's "rules for growth" which tells us to "never criticize what God is blessing." [3] Implying that church growth and changed lives prove God's delight in our human methods, it cancels His call to "be on guard" and to discern deception. Some may say, "don't touch God's anointed," but we don't believe any leader is so "anointed" that his teaching is beyond Biblical accountability. While only God can judge (<http://www.crossroad.to/HisWord/verses/topics/judge.htm>) the heart of a person, we are called to help each other *follow* His guidelines, not be *driven* by today's new management systems. [see *Driven or Led?* (<http://www.crossroad.to/HisWord/verses/topics/driven.htm>)] Praying that God would guide us, we began our response with the following background information.

As most of you know, Rick Warren, the founding pastor of Saddleback Church



"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

Ephesians. 6:16

“...we have this treasure in earthen vessels,
that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

We are

- hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed...
- perplexed, but not in despair
- persecuted, but not forsaken;
- struck down, but not destroyed
- always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.” 2 Corinthians 4:7-10

ENDNOTES:

1. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), page 20.
2. Ronald G. Havelock, *The Change Agent's Guide to Innovation in Education* (Educational Technology Publishing: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1973). According to Charlotte Iserbyt (note #4) “This Guide, which contains authentic case studies on how to sneak in controversial curricula and teaching strategies, or get them adopted by naive school boards, is the educator's manual for bringing about change in our children's values. Havelock's Guide was funded by the U.S. Office of Education and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and has continued to receive funding well into the 1980s. It has been republished in a second edition in 1995 by the same publishers. [Ed. Note: Why is it that the change agents' plans and their tools to “transform” our educational system never change, while parents and teachers are told, repeatedly, that they must be ready and willing to change?]”
3. James H. Furr, Mike Bonem and Jim Herrington, *Leading Congregational Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000). Authored by James H. Furr, Mike Bonem, and Jim Herrington in 2000, it was published by Jossey-Bass, the main publisher for the Peter Drucker Foundation (now called Leader to Leader) and the “Christian” Leadership Network founded by Bob Buford.
4. Charlotte Iserbyt, *the deliberate dumbing down of america* (sic), <http://www.deliberatedumbingdown.com/>
5. Larry C. Spears (Editor), *Reflections on Leadership* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995); pages 92, 301.
6. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).
7. Book review: *Making Change Happen One Person at a Time: Assessing Change Capacity Within Your Organization* (Amacon, 2000), posted at http://www.booksunderreview.com/Society/Generalogy/Surnames/Organizations/Organizations_13.html
8. Jim Van Yperen. Transcribed from taped message. Chain of Lakes Community Bible Church (CLCBC), Illinois, Sunday evening, April 14, 2002.
9. George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1997), page 254.

in Southern California, has been leading the way and breaking new ground in today's Church Growth Movement (http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/2002/change_agent-1.htm). With over 50,000 names on his church roll, he models the success of the church management process he outlined in his earlier book, *The Purpose-Driven Church*.

He also founded www.pastors.com, “a global Internet community that serves and mentors those in ministry worldwide.” This website tells us that “over 60,000 pastors subscribe to *Rick Warren's Ministry Toolbox*, a free weekly email newsletter.” [4] Then it summarizes his ministry:

“Rick Warren is well known as the pioneer of **The Purpose-Driven Church paradigm** for church health. More than 250,000 pastors and church leaders from over 125 countries have attended Purpose-Driven Church seminars in 18 languages. Peter Drucker calls him ‘*the inventor of perpetual revival*.’ Rick's previous book, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, has sold over a million copies in 20 languages. Winner of the Gold Medallion Ministry Book of the Year, it is used as a textbook in most seminaries, and was selected as one of the *100 Christian Books That Changed the 20th Century*.” [4]

Notice the reference to Peter Drucker. What this legendary management guru began teaching large corporations decades ago has now been applied to God's churches as well as to communities and governments around the world. Since the new methods seemed to “work” equally well for churches as for corporations — and since the measured results offer statistical “proof” of “success” — pastors from countless nations have embraced and implemented Drucker's marketing approach to “doing church.”

In a 2002 article in *Business Week* titled “Peter Drucker's Search for Community,” Ken Witty describes the world view that drives Drucker's plans and purpose:

“He brings a communitarian (http://www.crossroad.to/Quotes/brainwashing/third_way.htm) philosophy to his consulting.... He said that what he's all about is this search for community, the search for where people and organizations find community for noneconomic satisfaction....

“A lot of his ideas have become so accepted that it's hard for anyone to understand how original they were at the time he introduced them. It's sort of like Freud and psychoanalysis. Peter was the first, for example, to help managers understand that they had to define their businesses from *a customer's perspective*.” [5]

Focusing on the “customer's perspective” brings success. People *feel* satisfied. They come and they buy. When this process is applied to churches, it works! With polls and surveys, a church can easily uncover the “felt needs” of the unbelievers in the local community — then target their services to their intended consumers.

Why focus on the *felt needs of unbelievers* rather than the true *needs of God's family*? Doesn't this strategy turn God's principles upside down? Yes, but it also attracts the spiritual diversity needed for the dialectic process (<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/Reinventing2.htm>) — the heart of today's trans-

formation in churches as well as in business, education, government and other organizations. Dr. Robert Klenck summarizes it in his report on "The 21st Century Church (<http://www.crossroad.to/News/Church/Klenck3.html>)"

"...in this movement, **it is imperative that unbelievers are brought into the church; otherwise, the process of continual change cannot begin.** There must be an *antithesis* (unbelievers) present to oppose the *thesis* (believers), in order to move towards *consensus*.(compromise), and move the believers *away from their moral absolutism* (resistance to change). If all members of the church stand firm on the Word of God, and it's final authority in all doctrine and tradition, then the church cannot and will not change. This is common faith. Soon, we will see why these "change agents" are pushing so hard for change to occur in the church."

Pastor Warren's current tutor in this management process is CMS, a "full-service custom marketing and communications agency head-quartered in Covina, California." Its website shows its mission:

"At CMS, we view it as our mission to help our clients **grow their businesses.** We do this by working with each client identifying opportunities and developing innovative, creative and profitable services which assist them in the execution of effective marketing, sales and communications program.... We are best able to serve clients when they allow us to act as **partners**.... CMS is made up of a team of talented individuals whose dedication and expertise have earned them a solid reputation for **creating results.**"[6]
Shouldn't we credit God, not clever marketing, with "creating results?" After all, the Bible tells us that the "wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." Man's "wise" ways may fit our human purpose, but they clash with God's purpose. [1 Cor 3:19-20; Prov. 3:5-7]

While CMS' partners includes secular giants such as Quaker and Isuzu Motors America, it also serves clients such as the City of West Covina, "Purpose Driven Ministries," "Saddleback Valley Community Church," "Smalley Relationship Center" and "Walk Thru the Bible." [7] The latter was founded and led by Bruce Wilkinson, author of the well marketed bestseller, *The Prayer of Jabez*.

Part of CMS' success lies in the surveys, polls and tracking that characterize the 21st Century management systems:

"...collecting, organizing and managing data is essential to understanding, evaluating and planning of any successful promotion. That is why we developed our CMS Intelligent Redemption System. It is sophisticated proprietary software that allows us to program and initialize data.... Our purchasing standards and fulfillment procedures build-in tracking and accountability.... CMS Fulfillment Center specializes in direct mail projects, new product introductions, and promotion launches." [8]

No wonder curious visitors are flocking to Purpose-Driven churches. Small wonder pastors around the world are watching, listening, ready to follow.

This fall, "over 13,000 ministers and students" heard Pastor Warren explain the ways of a purpose-driven church at SuperConference 2003, held at

WHAT ABOUT YOU? Walking with Jesus may mean that you must speak unwanted truths, share the offense of the cross and separate yourself from the crowd. But when you face hostility, rejection and abandonment, Jesus is there — softening the pain and replacing it with His sweet presence.

After reading Pat Johnson's opening letter, I asked her how God strengthened and sustained her during the painful exclusion from her church "family" and friends.

May her answers encourage you:

- **By never leaving me even when I turned away from Him in hurt and anger**
- **By forgiving me daily for turning to the flesh and mercifully waiting for me to return to Him**
- **By speaking to me loud and clear through His Word.**
- **By increasing my faith, a prayer of my heart for a long time**
- **By steering me away from the instant gratification that the rock and roll churches tend to foster**
- **For teaching me to have more confidence that I am His child and am able to hear His voice**
- **By teaching me about His providence**
- **By lovingly revealing my own sin in response to being shunned**
- **By giving me a wonderful husband who has loved me without condition, even though this trial has surely tested us and our marriage**
- **By restoring my relationship with my parents and siblings. (They believed we had belonged to a cult.)**
- **By giving me 3 very active children to keep me going and focused and feeling loved, even when I was so very rejected (I was very worried that they would turn from God and reject His church, but thus far, it hasn't happened)**
- **By pruning away my self-pity**
- **By keeping me healthy and giving me the gift of running**
- **Forgiving me encouragement from believers on the Internet when I had no one else to turn to that understood the dynamic of controlling churches/ church leaders**
- **By showing me that there is no other way but through humility**
- **By freeing me from the dangerous practice of pleasing man (a life-long sin)**
- **The thing I am grateful for the most is the first thing I started with: He has never left me or forsaken me (though many have). This, to me, is mind-boggling and requires a faith that has only come from severe rejection by those I have loved and trusted.**

end as well as the beginning, and He warns us to watch for signs of things to come. He tells us to guard against the world's illusions and promises His strength in our weakness. He calls us to separation unto Him even as we love the lost and share His truth.

He tells us that His ways, His truth and His nature never change, for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). The almighty Father and sovereign Lord of the Old Testament is still our Father and Lord in New Testament times. And this holy and righteous "Lord will judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:30).

By His grace, His faithful followers find

**"refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us ...
an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast"**

(Heb 6:18-19).

But those who hop on the bandwagon of "CONTINUAL CHANGE" have no such anchor. Nor do they know where their ride will end, since they leave behind the unchanging absolutes of God's Word.

***"For many walk, of whom I have told you often,
and now tell you even weeping, that they are
the enemies of the cross of Christ:
whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly,
and whose glory is in their shame —
who set their mind on earthly things.
For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also
eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...."***

Philippians 3:18-20

Those whose hearts are set on eternal life, but walk with Jesus in this life, will share in His suffering and rejection. Even His disciples complained about some of His teachings, which was anything but politically correct. In John 6, we read His response to their grumbling:

***"Does this offend you ...It is the Spirit who gives life;
the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit,
and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe.'
For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe,
and who would betray Him. And He said, 'Therefore I have said to you
that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him
by My Father. 'From that time many of His disciples
went back and walked with Him no more.
Then Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also want to go away'"***

John 6:61-67

Jerry Falwell's Liberty University. Speaking on 'Attracting a Crowd to Worship,' Warren shared some basic principles behind church growth. He aimed his words at those who were "stuck in the past:"

"I believe that one of the major church issues [of the future] will be how we're going to reach the next generation with our music,' he said, admitting, 'You can make more people mad with music than anything else in church....

"To insist that all good music came from Europe 200 years ago; there's a name for that - racism.... Encourage members to re-arrange and rewrite. *New songs say **God is doing something awesome.**"* [9] *Emphasis added*

Do they? Or might the new songs reflect man's desire to please the crowds? It's all too easy to justify our attempts to meet "felt needs" and demonstrate success. We simply reinvent God's character and will, claiming that *our* purpose is *His* purpose. Assuming that He loves the same things we love, we assign Him an image more like our own. But in Psalm 50:21 (http://www.crossroad.to/HisWord/verses/human_nature/Psalm50-21.htm) God warns us against such shortsighted assumptions about God's nature. "*You thought that I was altogether like you,*" He told His people, "but I will rebuke you...."

Pastor Warren again claimed divine approval during a "Building a Purpose-Driven Church" seminar held at Saddleback Community Church in January, 1998. Basing church growth strategies on personal wants, not on the guidelines of God's Word, he said,

"Now, at Saddleback Church, we are unapologetically contemporary... I passed out a three-by-five card to everybody in the church, and I said, 'You write down the call letters of the radio station you listen to.' I wasn't even asking unbelievers. I was asking the people in the church, 'What kind of music do you listen to?' When I got it back, I didn't have one person who said, 'I listen to organ music.' Not one.... So, we made a strategic decision that we are unapologetically a contemporary music church. And right after we made that decision and stopped trying to please everybody, Saddleback exploded with growth....

"I'll be honest with you, we are loud. We are really, really loud on a weekend service.... I say, 'We're not gonna turn it down.' Now the reason why is *baby boomers want to feel the music, not just hear it.... **God loves variety!***" [2]

Does God *really* love today's cultural "variety?" I doubt that God is pleased when we feed our cravings and strengthen our "need" for emotional stimuli. When ancient Israel became bored with God's Word and embraced a wide variety of cultural and spiritual thrills, God disciplined them severely. He even compared his wayward people with a "wild donkey... that sniffs at the wind in her desire." Jeremiah 2:24

When church leaders use energizing music, emotional stimuli and short, light messages to satisfy the flesh with its "felt needs," they tend to obscure our deeper spiritual needs. Fed a diet of simplified sermons designed to please everyone, both seekers and believers may lose their appetite for the solid Biblical teaching which — by His Spirit — produces conviction of sin, genuine

repentance, actual regeneration, true spiritual renewal and the continual joy of walking with Jesus.

Widening the gate to the Kingdom

The phenomenal success of Rick Warren's books and marketing skills has both popularized and accelerated the Church Growth Movement (CGM). Around the world, seekers and believers are reading *The Purpose Driven Life* and discussing its 40 chapters. Following its guidelines, they share their thoughts, express their feelings and "bounce ideas off each other." [1, page 11] They sign contracts and hold each other accountable to the social and spiritual ideals of the 21st Century Church community. And, says Pastor Warren, their lives are being transformed. [see note: transformation]

I am sure many are. Pastor Warren has written some encouraging pages about God, His glory, our walk with Him and our fellowship with one another. I especially appreciate the sections that show the delight of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. But I was a little concerned when he invited all his readers to "quietly whisper **the prayer that will change your eternity**: 'Jesus, I believe in you and I receive you.'" [1, page 58]

You might ask, what could possibly be wrong with that short prayer? Why question his promise that it would open the gate to God's Kingdom and "change... eternity" for all who prayed? Don't we want to bring as many as possible into God's eternity?

Yes, of course we do! And God could surely use those nine words to draw His chosen ones to Himself. But the **promises** and **assumptions** that accompany the prayer could also produce serious problems in the church. For many will pray the prayer with little or no awareness of the holy nature of God, of the unholy power of sin, or of the deep chasm between the two. In our times of easy believism and Biblical illiteracy, anyone can personalize and claim God's promises without any prompting by the Spirit, genuine conversion (spiritual rebirth) or lasting inner change. Where people learn to tolerate evil and flow with the crowd, true repentance is rare and faith often becomes presumption. Still unregenerate, many happily accept the group's consensus: *You prayed the prayer, therefore you must be a Christian.*

Pastor Warren agrees. "If you sincerely meant that prayer, congratulations!" he tells the reader. "Welcome to the family of God! You are now ready to discover and start living God's purpose for your life! [1, page 59]

Thousands of small groups using Saddleback's study guide and Teaching Video for the 40 Days of Purpose are led in a slightly longer prayer. They hear Pastor Warren speak these words:

"Do you have a relationship with Jesus Christ? If you aren't sure of this, I'd like the privilege of leading you in a prayer to settle the issue. Let's bow our heads. I'm going to pray a prayer and you can follow it silently in your mind: *'Dear God, I want to know Your purpose for my life. I don't want to waste the rest of my life on the wrong things. Today I want to take the first step in preparing for eternity by getting to know You. Jesus Christ, I don't understand it all,*

answers? And why would the "critical thinking" strategies used by public schools to change our children's home-taught values now be used to transform churches?

The answer is simple but shocking.

FIRST, LCC tells Christian leaders that, "Using critical thinking intentionally to challenge the mental models of an organization is a key skill. Critical thinking is the process of taking a fresh look at a problem by stripping away the assumptions and constraints that may have been imposed in the past. It requires probing deeper than most groups are comfortable doing." [3, page 120-121]

SECOND, the goal for change agents in mega-churches matches the goal for UNESCO's worldwide education system. Concerned parents who have been watching the changing education system will be familiar with the term critical thinking. In the Glossary of our 1995 book, **Brave New Schools** (<http://www.crossroad.to/Books/BraveNewSchools/Contents.html>), we defined it as "Challenging students' traditional beliefs, values and authorities through values clarification strategies and Mastery Learning. (See Sex Ed and Global Value and Three Sets of Meanings of Educational Buzzwords (<http://www.crossroad.to/charts/NewMeanings.html>))

Don't minimize the significant parallel between church and school.

The words and phrases used by the two systems may differ at times, but the **manipulative management methods and change processes are identical**. Both fit into the "seamless" structure of the global management system. Both would agree that it's okay to criticize and tear down the old ways of thinking and believing. But it's not okay to criticize the global vision for a utopian future or the march toward solidarity in a new world order. Both the vision and the method were planned by socialist leaders back in 1945 through 1948, when Alger Hiss, Julian Huxley and Brock Chisholm (the first heads of the United Nations, the UNESCO and the World Health Organization) outlined the ambitious plan for global solidarity through education and mental health standards around the world. Their vision hasn't changed in the last 59 years. If anything, it's stronger and more acceptable to our culture and churches than ever. [See "Legalizing Mind Control (<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/2003/1-mental.htm>)" and The Revolutionary Roots of the UN (<http://www.crossroad.to/Excerpts/chronologies/un.htm>)]

Where do God, the Holy Spirit and the Bible fit into this monstrous worldwide system that uses deception and behavior modification to mold Human Resources for the Global Workforce? They don't. That's why schools must either ban or adapt religion to the ultimate goals of our globalist managers. And that's why change agents assigned to transform churches must redefine Biblical terms, paraphrase Scripture verses, and determine which truths are useful and which are offensive. Behind the familiar sounding mission, vision and purpose statements stands a system that leaves little room for the actual guidance of the Holy Spirit. There is no room for God's ways if they can't be conformed to the detailed man-made plans for change.

Certainty and peace in the midst of change and struggle

Man's grandiose aims and deceptive strategies never surprise God. He sees the

"Rick's Rules of Growth.... Third, never criticize what God is blessing, even though it may be a style of ministry that makes you feel uncomfortable."

[1, page 62]

Who determines what God is blessing? Does the growth come through the Holy Spirit or through the latest strategies in behavior modification? The assessments that measure progress toward pre-planned outcomes don't discern spiritual influences — whether from God or other forces. Like public schools, they measure personal change toward collective thinking and readiness to cooperate, but they can't test the heart or measure obedience to the promptings of the Spirit. So the question remains: are new members added because they were seeking God or because they liked the feel-good fellowship, the sense of belonging and the unconditional respect?

Listen to the words Jesus spoke to the crowds fascinated with His message and healing power. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life....?"* Matthew 6:26-27?

Peter Drucker's unbiblical emphasis on success by man's standards should stir great alarm among Christians. What happens to people who don't fit his blueprint for productive human resources? Sarah Leslie, co-author of *The Pied Pipers of Purpose*, a vital document that makes the complexities and connections behind the new management systems understandable, wrote:

"We've come across numerous references in the Purpose-Driven literature to a concept called 'abandonment.' It is a Peter Drucker concept that has to do with businesses abandoning parts of their business that don't make money. In the private sector (churches) it translates into churches abandoning projects that don't produce pre-defined 'results' (the measurable kind, 'outcomes,' etc.). This also means abandoning people who don't go along with the flow — the 'laggards' who won't participate in the transformation. A church split is seen as a good thing, in that it gets rid of those people who are blocking progress towards church restructuring."

If someone were to rewrite the parable of the Shepherd who leaves the 99 sheep to search for the one that was lost, do you wonder if he would check to make sure the one lost sheep would fit the new management standards?

One of the standard rules for small group dialogue tells members to respect every diverse position or point of view. Don't violate someone's comfort zone by implying that an unbiblical behavior or lifestyle constitutes sin. As LCC tells us, *"Create a safe environment. Participants in the process must feel that they have permission to raise questions, challenge assumptions, and explore a variety of options. In transformational planning, there can be no sacred cows."* [3, page 124]

Do you see the inconsistency? There is little respect for the old views and standards. Resisters within the church have no permission to question or challenge the change process. Why then would its change agents encourage critical challenges to truth in a group setting that discourages clear Biblical

but as much as I know how, I want to open my life to You. I ask you to come into my life and make yourself real to me. Use this series to help me know what You made me for. Thank you. Amen.'

"If you just prayed that prayer for the very first time, I congratulate you. You've just become a part of the family of God."

Is this a response to the gospel? Where is repentance, acknowledgement of need, or confession of personal sin? Where is the cross? The Bible tells us that saving "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." [Romans 10:17-18] But none of the Scriptures that show the gospel are mentioned in this first lesson. Biblically illiterate friends and neighbors who join the group would pray this prayer without any real knowledge of the cross, of the Savior, or of God's view of sin. In fact, the concept of *salvation* isn't included in the first lesson. And if it *had* been there, the context of the lesson would suggest that we are merely saved from a purposeless life — not from bondage to sin. For the first lesson deals with "the consequences of not knowing your purpose" — not with Jesus Christ. It warns the group that "without knowing your purpose, life will seem TIRESOME... UNFULFILLING... UNCONTROLLABLE." And it repeats the positive (but not particularly Biblical) promise that "knowing the purpose of your life will -

- "give your life FOCUS."
- "SIMPLIFY your life."
- "increase MOTIVATION in your life."
- "PREPARE YOU FOR ETERNITY."

Even so, all who pray the prayer will be affirmed and celebrated as new members of the family of God. But are they? We don't know. Yet, statistics suggest that most people who call themselves Christians have little understanding of the gospel.

It's not surprising. Today's "positive" gospel emphasizes love, minimizes doctrine and ignores divine justice. The essential Biblical truths that prepare hearts for genuine conversion no longer fit. A postmodern "believer" may be full of self-confidence but woefully short on spiritual awareness. A recent study by pollster George Barna bears this out:

"...relatively few people have a biblical worldview - even among devoutly religious people. The survey discovered that **only 9% of born again Christians have such a perspective** on life. The numbers were even lower among other religious classifications....

"For the purposes of the research, a biblical worldview was defined as believing that **absolute moral truths** exist; that such **truth is defined by the Bible**; and firm belief in six specific religious views. Those views were that **Jesus Christ lived a sinless life**; **God is the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator** of the universe and **He stills rules it today**; **salvation is a gift from God** and cannot be earned; **Satan is real**; a Christian has a responsibility to share their faith in Christ with other people; and the **Bible is accurate** in all of its teachings.....

"Upon comparing the perspectives of those who have a biblical worldview with those who do not, the former group were 31 times less likely to accept cohabitation; 18 times less likely to endorse drunkenness; 15 times less likely to condone gay sex; 12 times less likely to accept profanity; and 11 times less likely to describe adultery as morally acceptable. In addition, less than one-half of one percent of those with a biblical worldview said voluntary exposure to pornography was morally acceptable (compared to 39% of other adults), and a similarly miniscule proportion endorsed abortion (compared to 46% of adults who lack a biblical worldview).[10]

"At least Christians are not the only ones addled by their culture into holding contradictory beliefs," writes Gene Edward Veith. "Atheists are just as confused about their theology. ... They believe that accepting Christ can bring eternal life, even though they don't believe in Jesus Christ. Just like 'nonevangelical born-againers.'" [11]

But they're all coming together under the worldwide ecumenical umbrella of the Church Growth Movement. As I wrote in *Re-Inventing the Church*, the 21st century vision of global oneness is drawing diverse churches and people into vast "Christian" networks that provide trained leadership and management consultants. Rick Warren's communitarian management guru, Peter Drucker, described it well. Quoting him in a 1994 report, the "Leadership Network" wrote,

"The Spirit is moving.... there is a substantial critical mass of people and churches that are already moving.' ... While acknowledging that there are **still many unhealthy churches** [those that don't conform to the new, inclusive pattern], there is a justified '**change in basic premises**, basic attitudes, **basic mindset**... on the whole, we are on the march...."[12] [emphasis added]

As you saw earlier, this diversity is essential to the mind-changing dialectic process (<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/Reinventing2.htm>) that Drucker has helped establish in organizations everywhere. (We will take a closer look at it in Part 7 of this series) Remember Robert Klenck's words: "...in this movement, it is imperative that unbelievers are brought into the church; otherwise, the process of continual change cannot begin. There must be an *antithesis* (unbelievers) present to oppose the *thesis* (believers), in order to move towards *consensus*. (compromise), and move the believers *away from their moral absolutism* (resistance to change)." If the church member continues to resist change, they may be asked to leave. Many concerned and uncompromising Christians can testify to the pain of being expelled under the banner of "church discipline."

Unlike some church leaders today, Pastor Warren does try to define sin. Before introducing his salvation prayer, he wrote, "All sin, at its root, is failing to give God glory. It is loving anything else more than God. Refusing to bring glory to God is prideful rebellion, and it is the sin that caused Satan's fall—and ours, too. In different ways we all lived for our own glory, not God's. The Bible says, 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.'" [1, page 55]

That's true. But this general sin which applies to all of humanity will

not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths....) and Hebrews 13:17 ("*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority....*")

But taking a stand on God's Word is hardly what the Bible refers to as "**unwholesome talk.**" And, if church leaders followed the world's management system rather than God's way, the command to "*obey your leader and submit....*" would be overruled by other relevant Scriptures.

For example, when the religious leaders in Jerusalem told John and Peter to stop teaching "*in the name of Jesus,*" they answered, "*Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*?" Acts 4:19

Church management consultant and interim pastor, Jim Van Yperen, might disagree. Teaching on submission at a church where he had been hired to lead the change process, he said,

"*It's sin not to submit.... By my refusal to admit it is sin, it's a further problem. That's what Satan wants to do. He wants to separate us. And if he can give me the idea that I'm right and you are wrong so I'm not going to submit to you because you are crazy or I don't like you or I'm not going to listen to you or I'm won't come to church... that's an act of sin. It's rebellion. It's sin. It needs to be confessed, repented of and forgiven. Most of what happens in the church that get us into trouble are these relational sins that we want to minimize and say, 'No I just disagree.' We'll talk about disagreement. There's not a lot of things you have permission to disagree about.*" [8]

Van Yperen wrote a chapter titled "Conflict: The Refining Fire of Leadership" for George Barna's book, *Leaders on Leadership* back in 1997. "A leader of leaders," George Barna calls him. Like other leading change agents, he is "**a marketing strategist and communications consultant,**" who "*has worked with a wide variety of churches, parachurch ministries and non profit organizations in the areas of vision development, strategic planning, communications, resource development and conflict resolution.*" His international influence makes his next statement significant. Notice its emphasis on collective, holistic or "SYSTEMS THINKING" — **one of the more important outcomes of the world's new management system and its consensus process.**

Ponder the far-reaching implication of this postmodern principle:

"*Think in wholes, not in parts.... God views sin as a community responsibility. When one person in the community sins, the whole community bears the guilt.*" [9]

You saw evidence for of Pastor Warren's holistic views in the chapter on "Unity and Community." Some of the following rules or principles also reflect a collective ideal. Violations open the door to various disciplines:

"*God blesses churches that are unified. At Saddleback Church, every member signs a covenant that includes a promise to protect the unity of our fellowship. As a result, the church has never had a conflict that split the fellowship....*" [1, page 167]

semble the tares in the wheat field. They appear willing to change, but use a variety of ever-so-subtle tactical means to prevent the organization from reaching its objective."[7]

Where pragmatism rules, anything goes. As The Change Agent's Guide to Innovation in Education tells us: *"Sometimes collaboration will not work and, when it fails, there are a number of alternatives that should be considered, ranging from complete abandonment to complete deception."*[2, page 131]

No doubt many are being deceived. And all who embrace this process of "**MANAGED CHANGE**" tend to share its hostility toward resisters. Some of you may identify with the pastor who sent us the following letter:

"I am a pastor of a small congregation in Australia that grew out of a desire for the TRUTH.... Having been branded rebellious and out of divine order for challenging the senior leadership of a large church, (of which I was a pastor) — and having been disciplined by the senior pastor and the elders because I dared to address the errors of our ways and to challenge even our vision and church programs (which were hurting more people than healing) — my wife and I soon found ourselves 'churchless.'

"Following some painful experiences of ostracism and spiritual rejection, I sought God in fasting and prayer for a week in solitude.... Our glorious and faithful heavenly Father finally broke through and after much weeping, brokenness — and repentance for the sins of self-effort and trying to please man rather than God, we were led into His wilderness for more trials and testing. We grew stronger in faith and deeper in His Word than we ever had before, and found refuge and strength in Him alone.

Since then God has taken us through a time of searching the scriptures and fasting and prayer for His church. In time, God sent those who had also been 'rejected' or left the church because they could no longer tolerate the sin, compromise and false or diluted teachings, and we found ourselves meeting and worshipping in homes as in Acts 2. We now meet weekly and are growing in His glorious Word, and in biblical fellowship together.

Rick Warren's '40 Days of Purpose' is taking this country by storm and just about every church is running it. Before I even looked at it I felt a heaviness on my heart and a check in my spirit.... I began to read the book. Having already heard of the damage done to many churches by his 'Purpose Driven Church' years before, I was reluctant to do so, but I felt it my duty to at least look at the material. It wasn't long before I began to see the deception, not so much by what he taught, but by what was missing...."
Emphasis added

6... ESTABLISH RULES, REGULATIONS, LAWS AND PRINCIPLES

THAT SILENCE, PUNISH OR DRIVE OUT RESISTERS.

At Saddleback, every new member must sign a "**Membership Covenant.**" It includes this innocuous promise:

"I will protect the unity of my church... by following the leaders."

This COVENANT is backed by Scriptures such as Ephesians 4: 29 ("Do

hardly cause postmodern unbelievers to sense any genuine guilt or a personal need for the cross. Unlike former generations of Americans, few have been taught the basic truths about our Biblical God and His moral standards.[14] Many simply dismiss the notion of "sin" as old-fashioned legalism and shut their eyes to its corrupting power in their own lives. When faced with today's non-offensive teaching on sin, many translate it into a more comfortable half truth: *"Sin is a normal part of life, and I'm just as good as everyone else — maybe a little better. Besides, God understands and loves me as I am."*[15] In other words, there's no sense of guilt, fear or brokenness before our eternal Judge! Like ancient Israel, "They were not at all ashamed; nor did they know how to blush." Jeremiah 6:13-15

In contrast to this postmodern norm, Jesus shows us a heartfelt response that pleases Him. While dining at the home of the self-satisfied Simon, He explains the blessing of a truly repentant heart:

"And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped [them] with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, [the same] loveth little." Luke 7:37-47.

This precious woman was familiar with God's moral law — what the Bible describes as "our tutor to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith." [Gal 3:25] While that uncompromising law [14] exposed her guilt and depravity, it also caused her to treasure God's wonderful forgiving grace with all her heart. Unlike those who ignore God's standard and their own sinful inclinations, she was overwhelmed with gratitude to the One who forgave her sin and set her free from the weight of the law and from bondage to her "flesh" (sinful human nature).

God had prepared her heart and she humbly gave herself to her beloved Lord — heart, mind and soul. Jesus, in turn, held her up as an example to others.

Her response to God's loving mercy illustrates the fourth category in Jesus' parable of the sower. Remember, the *sower* (God) scatters the *seed* (the "word of the kingdom") which fall into four types of *soil* (or heart conditions): **TYPE 1...** By the wayside: The person "**hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it**, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart."

TYPE 2... On stony ground: "**he hears the word and immediately receives it with joy**; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles."

TYPE 3... Among thorns: "**he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.**" The gospel of Luke adds "**the desires for other things.**"

TYPE 4... On good ground: "he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." Matthew 13:20-23

All four *hear* the life-giving word of truth, but only two *receive* it. Both the second and the fourth *appear* to have entered into the Kingdom, but only the fourth proves faithful and wins the prize: God's gracious sufficiency and His abundant fruitfulness. Only the last group "understands" God's Word, demonstrates His enduring strength and *knows* the hope of eternal life with Christ. Those gifts are *only* given to those who are **truly "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."** John 1:13

This saving faith will be tested. New believers will face struggles, temptation, suffering and persecution — all normal for those who are called to share in the suffering of Christ. They will fall, fail, grieve and repent, but they will always return to the One whose Word and Spirit have transformed their hearts. In contrast, others will leave this narrow way when life gets tough or the world too tempting — not because God has revoked His saving grace, but because they were not truly changed in the first place. Look at the next Scripture:

"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in [your] mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and [be] not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, [and] which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;"

Col. 1:21-23.

Pastor Warren seems to minimize the sobering reality behind God's warnings and inflate God's promises. To back his assertion that all who pray his prayer are automatically transformed by the Holy Spirit, he quotes a phrase from a "Scripture" from *The Message*, (http://www.crossroad.to/Bible_studies/Message.html) a paraphrased Bible translation by Eugene Peterson that promises, "Whoever accepts and trust the Son gets in on everything, life complete and forever!" [John 3:36a] The chart below shows the whole verse in the three standard translations (the second half is italicized):

KJV	NKJV	NIV	Message
"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36	"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." John 3:36	"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." John 3:36	"Whoever accepts and trust the Son gets in on everything, life complete and forever!" [John 3:36a] [1, page 58]

Do you wonder what the open-ended phrase, "gets in on everything," means? Written in "present tense," it could mean just about anything someone might imagine. To contemporary seekers who *think* they know God, it could imply an exciting and irresistible heavenly life here on earth — a blissful offer

"We must obey God rather than man."

Pastor Warren is more subtle, yet he models an attitude that breeds intolerance and judgment toward individuals who violate his politically correct guidelines concerning unity and relational synergy. As you saw earlier, he equates sincere Christians who question the adoption of the world's methodology with germs and disease within the body. And he calls on the church leadership to *"remove growth-restricting diseases and barriers so that natural, normal growth can occur."* [1, page 16]

What are those barriers? Are they the thoughts and actions that the Scriptures call sins, or are they attitudes and values that clash with psychological criteria for a politically correct "healthy church?" As Pastor Warren demonstrates throughout *The Purpose Driven Life*, it's all too easy to prove a point by cloaking the world's psychological notions in short, simple or paraphrased Scriptures taken out of context.

5... VILIFY THOSE WHO "STAY AND FIGHT." At this stage, negative labels, accusations and slander are permitted, if not encouraged, to circulate. Resisters — now labeled as divisive troublemakers — are blamed for disunity, for slowing the change process, and for distracting the church body from whole-hearted focus on its all-important vision, mission or purpose. Ponder the subtle suggestions and negative labels Pastor Warren attaches to individuals who question his purpose-driven management system:

"The Bible knows nothing of solitary saints or spiritual hermits isolated from other believers...." [6, page 130]

"Today's culture of independent individualism has created many spiritual orphans—'bunny believers' who hop around from one church to another without any identity, accountability or commitments. Many believe one can be a 'good Christian' without joining (or even attending) a local church, but God would strongly disagree." [6, page 133]

"A church family moves you out of self-centered isolation." [6, page 133]

"Isolation breeds deceitfulness." [6, page 134]

Notice the derogatory implication in each statement. We discussed some of God's special "solitary saints" earlier. Trusting God alone, they grew strong in Spirit. Those who have searched long and hard for a Biblical church with solid teaching and edifying fellowship may identify with what Rick Warren mocks as **"bunny believers."** And the **"isolation"** of a faithful Christian who obeys God's call to separation from worldliness and unbiblical fellowship produces purity, not deceitfulness. [2 Corinthians 6:12-18]

Yet unfair and misleading labels continue to undermine the credibility of faithful believers. In a review of the book, *Making Change Happen One Person at a Time: Assessing Change Capacity Within Your Organization*, resisters were labeled *"tares in a wheat field."* [7] In other words, a negative Biblical image was used to disgrace those who couldn't conform. Those who flowed with the change were the "wheat field." Resisters were tares:

"At the opposite end of the leadership spectrum are the resisters who re-

His truth.

Change agents have little tolerance for such an uncompromising Biblical position. It gets in the way of total and continual change. Therefore, LCC warns its readers to remain vigilant, keep promoting the vision (or purpose) and build congregational support.

Notice that the strategic vision, NOT the Holy Spirit, must guide the process: *“Never stop. The change process never truly ends. ... The art of leadership is knowing when to pause and when to press forward.... It is easy to be lulled into a premature feeling of victory after the first round of implementation. Established momentum and alignment will—*

- *Spread the vision ... to a congregation-wide effort*
- *Steadily break down the residual places of resistance*
- *Instill a new approach for vision-guided, strategic decision making throughout the congregation*
- *Create the mindset and systems that will help the church... maintain or increase its impact on its community.”*[3, page 93]

“There is no ‘next stage,’ but the change process is never-ending. The eight stages of the change process need to be revisited often. This cycle becomes a part of the congregation’s culture and way of life.”[3, page 94]

4... MARGINALIZE MORE PERSISTENT RESISTERS. They obstruct progress and undermine the needed unity, momentum and passion for change. That’s why pastors often suggest to “divisive” members that they might be happier elsewhere. When the unhappy members leave, they usually, out of obedience to their Lord, follow the pastor’s request that they not speak to anyone about their reasons for leaving. The congregation will be told not to ask any questions. Thus the change leaders avoid potential conflict.

The LCC summarizes this stage:

“Some loss of members is likely throughout the change process. Even at this late stage, some people will decide that they are not on board with the vision and that they need to leave. When this happens, leaders must be willing to allow people to find a different place to worship.... The worst mistake is to compromise the vision to try to retain a few members.

“Change leaders must also be prepared to deal with members who choose to ‘stay and fight.’ When the resistance is overt and destructive, failure to act on the problem is far worse than the cure. The Bible gives clear principles in Matthew 18 for how to handle these conflicts.” [3, page 91]

Actually, Matthew 18:15-17 shows God’s way of dealing with an actual sin — a violation of God’s law or guidelines — not someone who, in obedience to God’s Word, takes a stand. Yet, in spite of the enforced tolerance toward moral and spiritual sins within the Church Growth Movement, there is little tolerance toward those who appear to disobey the top-down mandates of this manipulative management system. Sold out to pragmatism, it often turns a blind eye to Scriptures such as Acts 5:29,

that few would reject.

But when you compare that version of John 3:36 with any standard translation, you find that Mr. Peterson had added that alluring phrase in spite of God’s repeated command *not* to add to — or delete from — His unchanging, Spirit-breathed Word. [16] The result is another misleading half-truth that obscures the fact that walking with Jesus means sharing His suffering. We forget that some of God’s most faithful servants have faced poverty, hardships and torture that defy our comfort-centered Western comprehension, yet they endured the pain for the greater joy of serving their beloved King now and forever.

Pastor Warren starts the next chapter (8) in his book with this feel-good assurance for all who prayed the prayer:

“The moment you were born into the world, God was there as an unseen witness, smiling at your birth.... You are a child of God and you bring pleasure to God like nothing else he has ever created.” [1, page 63]

This “positive” gospel will surely meet man’s “felt need” for affirmation, identity and a sense of belonging. The masses are more than willing to believe in this new tolerant, non-judging God who fits their postmodern culture. But God doesn’t promise to make us comfortable and pamper our feelings. While He does promise the resources needed to meet each day’s challenges, some of those spiritual resources have little to do with today’s “felt needs.” Instead His path for us may be lonely and rough, full of steep climbs and “impossible” challenges. Yet, as we persevere in faith, we will hear His sweet voice whispering, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in your weakness.” [2 Cor 12:9]

Did you hear that? God will use our weakness, not our strengths! No need for management consultants and surveys that measure our natural abilities in order to discover our spiritual gifts [1, page 57] and God’s purpose for us! The Shepherd will lead us along His chosen ways, narrow and winding paths that may differ radically from our human plans and purposes!

But those who have not yet been “crucified with Christ” and filled with the Holy Spirit will neither hear the Shepherd nor “comprehend the Scriptures.” [17]. That’s one of the reasons why today’s spiritual diversity demands simplified Bibles that have been paraphrased, reinterpreted and made appealing to the natural mind.

Softening God’s Word

Unregenerate “believers” who love the ways of the world will want a church that fits that world. To make them feel at home — and to satisfy curious seekers — the church must now re-invent itself. Since no one can really understand God’s truth unless the Holy Spirit reveals it to their hearts [see 1 Cor 2:9-16], God’s Word must be simplified so that everyone — Christian or not — can relate to it.

It’s not surprising that Pastor Warren quotes passages from *The Message* (a paraphrased “version” of the Bible by Eugene Peterson) over ninety times.

Many of those simplified passages alter both the words and the meaning of the Scriptures. But they fit the points Pastor Warren is trying to make. So do other paraphrased Bibles that he uses.

Please compare *Today's English Version's* interpretation of Isaiah 26:3 with the corresponding passages in three ...Bible translations: the King James Version (KJV), the New King James Version (NKJV) and the New International Version (NIV). ..., the three translations illustrate the gap between standard translations and modern paraphrases. Today's English Version's (TEV) seems to fit Pastor Warren's need here — perhaps because it uses the word "purpose:"

KJV	NKJV	NIV	TEV
"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Is 26:3	"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." Is 26:3	"You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you." Is 26:3	"You, LORD, give perfect peace to those who keep their purpose firm and put their trust in you." Is 26:3 (page 32)

"Knowing your purpose focuses your life," he assures us. "It concentrates your effort and energy on what's important. You become effective by being selective." [1, page 32]

But the early Hebrew documents promised peace to those "whose minds were stayed on" God, not to those who "kept their purpose firm." Think about it: Wouldn't God's actual Word be a more reliable focus for our lives? Won't He lead us when, by His Word and Spirit, we keep our *minds stayed on Him*? Doesn't His Word suggest we be led, not driven, (<http://www.crossroad.to/HisWord/verses/topics/driven.htm>) by our wonderful Shepherd?

Pastor Warren might agree, since he encourages us to memorize and meditate on God's Word. But he suggests that we select Bible verses out of *his* book which begins and ends with quotes from *The Message*. On page 325, he explains why:

"...we often miss the full impact of familiar Bible verses, *not* because of poor translating, but simply because they have become so familiar! We *think* we know what a verse says because we have read it or heard it so many times. Then when we find it quoted in a book, we skim over it and miss the full meaning. Therefore I have deliberately used paraphrases in order to help you see God's truth in new, *fresh* ways.... [emphasis in the original]

"Also, since the verse divisions and number were not included in the Bible until 1560 A.D., I haven't always quoted the *entire* verse, but rather focused on the phrase that was appropriate. My model for this is Jesus and how he and the apostles quoted the Old Testament. They often just quoted a phrase to make a point." [1, page 325]

His FIRST argument doesn't match reality. Those who are truly "born again" treasure God's Word as it is written. The more familiar it becomes, the more precious it is! He brings the words we have "hidden in our heart" to our awareness day and night as we need it for comfort, strength and joy in Him. "Your words were found, and I ate them," said Jeremiah, "and Your word was

LCC's suggestions fit right in:

"Treat Each New Initiative as an Experiment. ... People are less resistant to a short-term experiment than they are to a 'permanent' change. ... An experiment signals that the leaders do not claim to have all the answers. Experiments give people more room to innovate, learn and improve with less risk of repercussion. ... Measure, measure, measure. Before beginning an experiment, a scientist defines the desired result and establishes procedures to measure the outcome. Measurement implementation requires clarity about the goal and process for evaluating progress." [3, page 82]

"Continually Monitor the Commitment Level. Healthy congregations have good feedback systems. As change occurs, commitment levels will vary. For some people any change calls for a 'withdrawal from the emotional bank account' (Covey, 1989). When the account is overdrawn, people become unwilling to make further changes. As withdrawals are made, change leaders should intentionally replenish the account through acts of kindness, good communication, love and concern." [3, page 104]

3... BEFRIEND, INVOLVE AND PERSUADE BORDERLINE RESISTERS.

Participation in small group dialogues may encourage borderline resisters to trade their traditional convictions for a more permissive fellowship. Some will reconsider their objections and conform to group demands. Others will quietly leave on their own.

"Coercive power only strengthens resistance," wrote Robert Vanourek in Reflections on Leadership. "...Instead the leader's skills at 'facilitating' the group should be used. The ideas should evolve from the group. Then the leaders can simplify them in a persuasive fashion. Then commitment to the vision can be gained." [5, page 301]

The words, "simplify them," means rephrasing and adapting the group views to the pre-planned outcome — a shrewd and subtle way of giving the people the impression that they actually conceive and "own" the results. This strategy works well in community forums around the world! As Ronald Havelock wrote in his Change Agent's Guide,

"Increasing pressure against the opposing forces usually will increase the resistance pressure. Frequently, but not always, the wisest and most effective course of action is to focus on ways of understanding and reducing resistance rather than trying to overwhelm it." [2, page 301]

The most effective solution is friendly persuasion. *"For unity's sake, we must never let differences divide us,"* wrote Pastor Warren. *"We must stay focused on what matters most — learning to love each other as Christ has loved us, and fulfilling God's five purposes for each of us and his church."* [1, pages 161-162]

That sounds good. But how can concerned Christians embrace a unity that involves compromising the truth? Only if our primary focus is fixed on Jesus and His Word can we truly share His agape love in a darkening world. For His name's sake, we can't let a human vision of unity force us to minimize

Havelock tells it like it is. This popular manual for TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS was funded by the U.S. Office of Education and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1973 and continued to receive government funding until the 1980s. Since then, it has been foundational to the training of

- teachers,
- pastors,
- politicians and
- change agents in diverse fields.

A few years ago, it was promoted on the churchsmart.com website. (The page has since been removed). Comparing Havelock’s model for change with the management process taught by Bob Buford, Rick Warren and their common mentor Peter Drucker, one quickly sees the similarities. All use the same basic formulas dressed in different words, phrases and illustrations. Like LCC, Havelock’s book prompts change agents to watch out for resisters:

“Many social systems also contain some members who assume the active role of resisters or critics of innovation. They are the defenders of the system the way it is, the self-appointed guardians of moral, ethical, and legal standards.... Resisters of various orders have been very successful in preventing or slowing down... diverse innovations.” [2, page 120]

“RESISTERS’ may be identified for having spoken out previously on the innovation or from having come to you with objections.... It is important, however, to try to identify resisters before they become vocal and committed on this particular innovation.” [2, page 122]

Charlotte Iserbyt, in her revealing book, the deliberate dumbing down of america,(sic) shares her observations of a meeting she attended many years ago when she worked for the US Department of Education:

“The presenter (change agent) taught us how to ‘manipulate’ the taxpayers/parents into accepting controversial programs. He explained how to identify the ‘resisters’ in the community and how to get around their resistance. He instructed us in how to go to the highly respected members of the community... to manipulate them into supporting the controversial/non-academic programs and into bad-mouthing the resisters.... I left this training—with my very valuable textbook, The Change Agent’s Guide to Innovations in Education, under my arm—feeling very sick to my stomach and in complete denial over that in which I had been involved. This was not the nation in which I grew up; something seriously disturbing had happened between 1953 when I left the United States and 1971 when I returned.” [4]

2...ASSESS RESISTERS AND DETERMINE THE DEGREE OF RESISTANCE.

Negative or uncompromising attitudes will be tracked using the sophisticated data systems that monitor each member. “Continual feedback” from these high-tech systems (made available to many large churches through Bob Buford’s Leadership Network) provides the data needed to make necessary adjustments. It’s all part of Total Quality Management! As we read in The “Change Agent’s Guide”, “Resisters should be judged for relative sophistication and influence.”

to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O Lord...” Jeremiah 15:16

SECOND, are we free to attribute the authority of the actual Scriptures to short sound bytes of paraphrased passages in order to validate our own points? Yes, Jesus, who was Himself the Living Word, had the absolute authority to speak His own message as He willed. But we are not God! That’s why He warns us repeatedly *not* to alter or add to His holy Word in any way.

“If anyone *adds unto these things*, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book,” He tells us in the Book of Revelation (22:18-19), “and if anyone *takes away from the words of the book* of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life....”

Those are strong words. That’s why many postmodern leaders consider them intolerant and exclude them from their teaching. But God considers the accuracy of His Word so vital to our walk with Him that He repeated this warning several times throughout the Bible.

“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it,” He told us through Moses in Deuteronomy 4:1-2. And in Proverbs 30:5-6, He warned: “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield unto those who put their trust in Him. *Add thou not unto his words*, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”

Yet, man’s incessant quest for “new, fresh ways” has always made us vulnerable to temptation. From the beginning, Satan has offered both pleasure and wisdom to those who would rephrase or revise God’s timeless Word — blending lies with truth that hide the deception. Back in the garden, it led to Eve’s disobedience and the alienation of humanity. Through the Middle Ages, it led to horrendous heresies and cruel persecution of those who took their stand on God’s unchanging Word. In our times, the rise of pragmatism and postmodernity has led to another round of revisions. And with the postmodern rejection of unchanging absolutes, there is no end in sight.

See how *The Message* has altered the meaning of God’s Word in the following passages. Though the first two references are not mentioned in the *Purpose Driven Life*, their precious familiarity helps us discern the contrast and realize how human additions and deletions distort His truths. The third reference is the last “Bible” verse Pastor Warren quotes in his book. Notice its new tone and attitude:

KJV	NKJV	NIV	Message
"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." Mat. 6:9	"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name." Mat. 6:9	"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." Mat. 6:9	"Our Father in heaven, reveal who you are." Mat. 6:9
"my Father is greater than I." John 14:28	"My Father is greater than I." John 14:28	"... the Father is greater than I." John 14:28	"The Father is the goal and purpose of my life." John 14:28

KJV	NKJV	NIV	Message
"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power...." Rev 4:11	"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power...." Rev 4:11	"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power...." Rev 4:11	"Worthy, Oh Master! Yes, our God! Take the glory! the honor! the power!..." [1, page 3:19]
"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Romans 8:6	"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Romans 8:6	"The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace." Romans 8:6	"Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life." [1, page 18]

Ponder the last section. To be "carnally minded" means far more than "obsession with self." It involves the spiritual blindness and death of a person who lives and thinks according to his own capricious human nature — separated from God's grace and Spirit. He may claim to be a Christian, but his finite mind cannot grasp God's truths, heart or will. A simpler, modified Bible, stripped of its deeper and harder truths, doesn't help. God never intended that the Bible should be understood apart from His supernatural work in the hearts of His chosen people. [Matt 13:13; Luke 8:10; Jer 5:21; Acts 26:18]

The other parallel follows. To be "spiritually minded" means that, through the Holy Spirit, the believer's mind has been opened to understand Scriptures. God's life-changing Truth has renewed his heart and enabled him to know and love God. It has given him the joy and endurance needed to follow the Shepherd — not along that spacious highway that draws the crowds — but on the narrow unpopular way which draws us ever closer to Him. Matt 7:13-14 Since the Bible is the foundation of our faith, we had better follow its clear and timeless guidelines. They alone enable us to maintain the purity and accuracy of His Word even as we translate it into all the world's different languages. In its totality, the Bible reveals the nature of God, the nature of man — both in Christ and apart from Him. Made alive by His Spirit, it reveals His guidelines for our lives, His promises of each day's challenges, His hope for eternity. It is the foundation of our faith and the standard for our lives.

But Pastor Warren sees a slightly different foundation.

As in *The Purpose-Driven Church*, his format shows us five purposes:

1. You were planned for God's pleasure.
2. You were formed for God's family.
3. You were created to become like Christ.
4. You were shaped for serving God.
5. You were made for a mission. [1, contents]

Those statements are all true, but they are incomplete as guidelines for all of life's challenges. Later he tells us:

"Knowing your purpose simplifies your life. It defines what you do and what you don't do. Your purpose becomes the standard you use to evaluate which activities are essential and which aren't. You simply ask, 'Does this activity help me fulfill one of God's purposes for my life?'"

The popular church management manual, *Leading Congregational Change* (LCC), promoted by Bob Buford's Leadership Network, offers a well-used plan. "This is a book you ought to read before you change anything," said Rick Warren in his hearty endorsement. Ponder its definition for resistance and the tone it sets:

"Address Specific Pockets of Resistance. Resistance is the 'opposite reaction' to change.... [It] can come in many different forms—confrontational or passive-aggressive, from known troublemakers or loyal supporters, as a result of a specific change or of an incorrect perception." [3, pages 90-91]

Since change agents must be totally committed to their strategic mission or purpose, they must also view dissenters as wrong. While some issues can be negotiated, this is not one of them. **SUCCESSFUL TRANSFORMATION** depends on persuading the vast majority to share their single-minded focus. Those who disagree with their manipulative strategies are viewed as intolerable barriers to the ultimate goal: a new way of collective thinking, being and serving.

In the end, the specific vision or stated purposes matter little. What counts are the unity and conformity derived from the common focus, the feel-good group experiences, the peer pressure, and the facilitated process. The only real obstacles to mass compliance are those (usually faithful members) who oppose the essential steps to top-down control and infect others with their doubts. You may recognize some of the steps:

1... IDENTIFY RESISTERS. In the Church Growth Movement, the resisters are those who question the need for systemic change (total restructuring of all facets), distrust the dialectic process, and criticize the transformational methods. What's worse, they refuse to shift their primary focus from the actual Scriptures to the positively phrased "purpose" or "vision" or "mission statement." LCC warns change leaders about this problem:

"Change leaders should expect resistance to team learning. ... Recognizing and making this resistance explicit to other team members tends to lessen its grip. It takes time for a group to emerge as a team, and all the concerns and resistance related to teams will resurface during this period."

[3, page 133]

Rick Warren is more subtle, and his references to health versus disease cloak his hostility toward "unhealthy" members who resist his agenda.

In *The Purpose Driven Church*, he writes:

"When a human body is out of balance we call that disease.... Likewise, when the body of Christ becomes unbalanced, disease occurs.... Health will occur only when everything is brought back into balance. The task of church leadership is to discover and remove growth-restricting diseases and barriers so that natural, normal growth can occur." [1, page 16]

Scott Peck, famed author of *"The Road Less Traveled"*, uses the same analogy. "There's a term therapists use; it's 'resistance,'" he writes in *Reflections on Leadership*, "which refers to people who don't like to or want to be healed or converted, so they resist." [5, page 92]

"The Change Agent's Guide to Innovation in Education" by Ronald G.

that shaming and shunning create....”

Vilifying and shaming “resisters” is nothing new. Old Testament prophets like Jeremiah and Isaiah described the rejection and mockery they endured for speaking God’s truth. In 17th century England, Pilgrims and Separatists faced ridicule, torture and imprisonment for refusing to conform to the Church of England’s demand for total conformity and universal participation. During the Spanish Inquisition, non-conforming Protestants were beheaded while villagers flocked to watch the show. In China today, millions of believers who worship their Lord outside the state-controlled church risk beatings and death under the capricious hand of Communist prison guards. Human nature doesn’t change, and social barriers to cruelty against non-conforming Christians crumble as Biblical morality yields to the world’s sensuality.

Who were targeted by the media after the tragic bombing of the Oklahoma Federal Building? Christians, conservative radio hosts and homeschooling parents together with Militia groups and criminals! Day after day, the media’s accusing pens pointed to suspected foes of American oneness — those whose “enraged rhetoric” had created a national “climate of hate and paranoia.” And their emotional appeals worked! It’s easier to shout, “Stop spreading hate!” than to encourage rational debate.

The same is true in postmodern churches. Like secular change agents, from UN visionaries to local educators, church leaders are being trained in the latest business management theories. They envision a unified community where all members participate in the required “lifelong learning” and facilitated consensus groups. No one would be exempt from the continual assessments that measure cooperation, monitor compliance and provide leaders with the feedback needed to periodically adjust the process. All would be tracked through a vast networks of databases available not just to the local church and government but, eventually, also to the United Nations. [See An International Information System (http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/2002/change_agent-1.htm)] And resisters — those who stand back and question the process — become enemies to this quest for oneness and solidarity. [See Ban truth (<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/2003/ban-truth.htm>) and Re-Inventing the Church (http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/2002/change_agent-1.htm)]

And no wonder! **“Because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world,”** warned Jesus, **“therefore the world hates you....If they persecuted Me they will persecute you.... for they do not know the One who sent Me.”** John 15:19-21

One reason why people conform to the seductive “change process” in evangelical churches is the fear of loss. Rejection hurts. But such fear is useful for today’s change agents. Just as severe public punishment has through the ages been used to frighten the masses into outward conformity, so fear of personal rejection now prompts people of all ages “to go along to get along.”

In order to **TRANSFORM CHURCHES** from the old ways (where pastors preach and everyone learns the Scriptures) to the Total Quality Management model, “transformational leaders” must find ways to curb resistance to change.

“Without a clear purpose, you have no foundation on which you base decisions, allocate your time, and use your resources.” [1, page 31]

What does Pastor Warren mean by “a clear purpose?”

A blend of his five stated purposes?

Neither the five purposes, nor any other single purpose, can replace Jesus Christ, the Living Word, as the “foundation on which you base decision, allocate your time and use resources.” Christ’s Life in us — speaking through His Word revealed to us — is our supreme, unrivaled foundation and guide. The Living Word remains “a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” no matter where His chosen purposes or unseen paths might take you and me for the duration of our lives on earth.

THE SPIRIT OF WORSHIP

In *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren wisely points to the importance of worship and surrender. “Worship must be based on the truth of Scripture, not our opinions about God,” he writes. [1, page 101] That’s so true! Yet, his book offers both opinions and illustrations that undermine that truth — including some misleading assumptions about God and what He loves.

“Worship must be both accurate and authentic,” he writes on page 102. “God-pleasing worship is both deeply emotional and deeply doctrinal.... The best style of worship is the one that most authentically represent your love for God, based on the background and personality God gave you.” He then gives the following illustration:

“My friend Gary Thomas noticed that many Christians seem *stuck* in a worship rut — an unsatisfying routine — instead of having a vibrant friendship with ‘God, because they force themselves to use devotional methods or worship styles that don’t fit the way God uniquely shaped them.’

“Gary wondered, If God intentionally made us all different, why should everyone be expected to love God in the same way?... In his book *Sacred Pathways*, Gary identifies nine of the ways people draw near to God: **Naturalists** are most inspired to love God out-of-doors, in natural settings. **Sensates** love God with their senses and appreciate beautiful worship services that involve their sight, taste, smell and touch, not just their ears..... **Ascetics** prefer to love God in solitude and simplicity. [Later in the book, Warren tells us that only those who participate in today’s organized church can grow spiritually.]... **Activists** love God through confronting evil, battling injustice, and working to make the world a better place....” [1, page 103] *Emphasis added*

Does Pastor Warren equate “activists” with the social and political activists that push churches and nations toward a global welfare system based on UN standards for social solidarity? Liberal churches and the World Council of Churches are major forces in this accelerating movement of “faith-based partnerships” that — under the banner of love and tolerance — serves the needy while silencing the gospel. [18]

But Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” John 18:36

"There is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to worship and friendship with God," continues Pastor Warren. "God wants you to be yourself." That's true. Then he validates his point with a quote from *The Message*: "That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship.'" Compare the three standard Bible translations below with Eugene Peterson's paraphrased *Message*. Notice the clash of words and meaning:

KJV: "...the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall **worship the Father in spirit and in truth**: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." John 4:23

NKJV: "...the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will **worship the Father in spirit and truth**; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him." John 4:23

NIV: "...a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will **worship the Father in spirit and truth**, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks." John 4:23

Message: "That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are **simply and honestly themselves** before him in their worship."

(page 103) *Emphasis added*

While God demands absolute honesty from His people, the word "truth" here implies far more than being "simply and honestly themselves." The central truth tells us about our wonderful Lord. Worship is our response to what His Word and Spirit have revealed to us about His glory and goodness. And Pastor Warren knows that very well. In spite of his pragmatic promotion of cultural compromise under the banner of church growth, he also includes some beautiful descriptions:

"Where is the glory of God? Just look around. Everything created by God reflects his glory in some way. We see it everywhere, from the smallest microscopic form of life to the vast Milky Way, from sunsets and stars to storms and seasons.... The Bible says. 'The heavens declare the glory of God....' [1, page 54]

"We cannot add anything to this glory, just as it would be impossible for us to make the sun shine brighter. But we are commanded to recognize his glory, honor his glory, declare his glory, praise his glory, reflect his glory and live for his glory. Why? Because God deserves it! We owe him every honor we can possibly give." [1, page 56]

So true! But while Warren reminds us that "Worship is a lifestyle," he bases his description of God on his own personal presumptions, not on Biblical revelation:

"Worship has nothing to do with the style or volume or speed of a song. **God loves all kinds of music** because he invented it all — fast and slow, loud and soft, old and new. You probably don't like it all, but **God does!**" [1, page 65]

He does? Including the throbbing beat of hard rock? [See Popular Music with Pagan Roots] (<http://www.crossroad.to/Books/YourChildNewAge/YCNA-15.html>) Or the pulsating sensuality of other forms of rock and hip hop? Or the

Dealing with Resisters

PART 4...

"I also believe that pastors are the most strategic change agents to deal with the problems society faces." [1, page 20] Rick Warren

A "change agent... should know about the process of change, how it takes place and the attitudes, values and behaviors that usually act as barriers.... He should know who in his system are the 'defenders' or resisters of innovations.... Try to identify resisters before they become vocal...."

[2, pages ix, 122] Ronald G. Havelock,

The Change Agent's Guide to Innovation in Education.

"Change leaders must also be prepared to deal with members who choose to 'stay and fight.'" [3, page 91] Leading Congregational Change

"The purpose driven life is being promoted in almost every church in my town. The banners are hanging everywhere! ... We pretty much stand alone with a few friends." A visitor to our website

The previous chapter triggered a stream of letters from troubled Christians around the world. They had watched as the focus of their churches shifted from Bible-based teaching to purpose-driven experiences. Many had sensed something wrong but couldn't define the problem. Some wondered how God's guidance fit into this tightly controlled man-made system. They had asked questions, but no one could calm their concern. They had tried to warn their pastor and friends but had been rebuffed. Some were even told to find another church. All shared the pain of rejection. The following letter from Pat Johnson illustrates the struggle faced by those who cannot, with a clear conscience, go along with a church that embraces the world's transformative marketing and management methods:

"I just read 'Small Groups and the Dialectic Process.' Absolutely dead-on! At the end of it, I read this paragraph which took my breath away: 'In today's Church Growth Movement, resisters are usually sifted out fairly early in the process. In the next installment, we will look at some of the ways non-conformists are assessed, exposed, vilified and dismissed from the church families they have loved, served and supported."

"I have been forced out of two churches for being such a 'resister.' I am a normal wife and mom and teacher who would not conform and, as you stated above, have been shunned and vilified. This has caused me considerable heartbreak and torment. For years I have struggled to cope with the shock of losing my church family and being branded as divisive."

"The ONLY way I have been able to come through this is to return to my Lord and trust His Word only. For years, I didn't really realize that I had drifted away from Him. Then when the storm hit, I didn't have the means to withstand it. By His grace and mercy, I have emerged from the mind-hell"

being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned..."
2 Timothy 3:1-14

THREE KINDS of GROUP RELATIONSHIPS			
	Biblical Fellowship & Christian Community	Human Friendship & Traditional Community	Dialectic Groups & Postmodern Community Example: <u>Community-Making</u>
	LED by the SPIRIT	DRIVEN by felt NEEDS	DRIVEN by organizational OUTCOMES or PURPOSES
Includes	"Born again" believers from all nations and cultures	All who choose to belong, share common interests and are accepted by the group	Diverse (spiritually & culturally) participants in the dialectic process
Foundation	God's Word and Spirit	Felt needs; natural desire to belong to a group	A pre-planned strategy and outcome (purpose) aimed at personal and social transformation
Goal	Love, faith and obedience to God, <i>agapeo</i> love for each other, unity in Christ	Build relationships, meet need for fellowship, have fun	Transformation: from former beliefs and values to an ever evolving group synthesis or consensus
Result	God is glorified through our worship, praise, service and oneness in Him.	Personal gratification, a sense of belonging, increased dependence on the group	Bonding of group members, willingness to compromise, changed beliefs and values, surrender of personal will & meaning to the group
Shows others:	God's supernatural <i>agapeo</i> love	Human <i>phileo</i> love	Skill of facilitator, power of the dialectic process
Ultimate goal	Eternity with God	Rich relationships in this world	Achieving the vision of the ideal community

ENDNOTES:

1. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002). See "Driven or Led?"
2. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995).
3. James H. Furr, Mike Bonem and Jim Herrington, *Leading Congregational Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000). Peter Senge, the founder and Chairman of MIT's **Society for Organizational Learning**, a "global community of corporations, researchers, and consultants," authored the 1995 book on systems thinking, *The Fifth Discipline*, which presents today's process for social and behavioral change. The article, "Peter Senge and the Learning Organization" mentions Senge's emphasis on dialogue and shared vision." It sug-

gests a "link here with the concerns and interests of communitarian thinkers." "'Leader as teacher' is not about 'teaching' people how to achieve their vision," wrote Peter Senge. "It is about fostering learning, for everyone. Such leaders help people throughout the organization develop systemic understandings."

4. Rick Warren, "Relationships hold your church together." <http://www.pastors.com/article.asp?ArtID=3917>
5. Rick Warren, *40 Days of Purpose, Transcript of Small Group & Sunday School Teaching Video* (PurposeDriven, Saddleback Parkway, Lake Forest, CA), page 16.
6. Scott Peck, *The Different Drum: Community-Making and Peace* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987); pages 69-70.
7. Edward Hunter, *Brainwashing* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1956), pages 50, 51.

hypnotic tones of New Age music?

While all parts of the universe were created by our sovereign Lord, he lets us use His raw materials according to our own inclinations — whether they honor or profane his name. But when we become part of His family and Kingdom, He holds us accountable to His high and holy standards — and to what He has revealed about Himself in His Word.

Again Pastor Warren seems to agree. He says, "I must choose to value what God values. This is what friends do — they care about what is important to the other person. The more you become God's friend, the more you will care about the things he cares about, grieve over the things he grieves over, and rejoice over the things that bring pleasure to him."

That's a great summary. Warren goes on to say that "Paul is the best example of this. God's agenda was his agenda and God's passion was his." Then he backs his statement with another quote from *The Message*, one that leaves out a key point: that God is a "jealous God." His holy jealousy is expressed through Paul in his concern for the church. To show you the context, we included the next verse as well:

KJV: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted..." 2 Cor 11:2-4

NKJV: "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted..." 2 Cor 11:2-4

NIV: "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him ." "But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray..." 2 Cor 11:2-4

Message: "The thing that has me so upset is that I care about you so much--this is the *passion* of God burning inside me!" 2 Cor 11:2 (page 97)

Emphasis added

Probing God's "passion," Warren asks: "What does God care about most? The redemption of his people. He wants all his lost children found! That's the whole reason Jesus came to earth. The dearest thing to the heart of God is the death of his Son. The second dearest thing is when his children share that news with others. To be a friend of God, you must care about all the people around you that God cares about."

Yes, that *sounds* right. But it's only a half-truth. Pastor Warren apparently quoted the above words from *The Message* to validate his point about "passion." [19] But the standard Bible translations based on early Greek sources actually refer to a different issue: God's zeal for purity and holiness in the Church. Paul was warning the Corinthians against corruption in His Body — a major concern in both the Old and New Testament. The apostle highlights this purpose again in his letter to the church in Philippi:

"...that ye may become blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, "holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, or labored in vain."

Philippians 2:15-16

In other words, God calls us to be different from the corrupt world around us. He has made us a holy people — set us apart for Himself. "They are not of the world," said Jesus, "even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:15-18

Pastor Warren's emphasis on passion hides this point. The issue of purity is replaced with the more contemporary issue of personal relationships. Thus feel-good relational guidelines become more important than the spiritual need for repentance and holiness in Christ.

Please don't think I would diminish the all important command to "love one another" as Christ loves us. But when corruption and worldliness seep into the church, God's *agapao* love — an expression of the Holy Spirit in us — is quenched. We may replace it with more human love such as *phileo* (friendship, affection, brotherhood) love, but it no longer fulfills the above command. (In spite of Pastor Warren's frequent reference to our "friendship with God," the Bible never uses the word *phileo* in any of the commands that we love God. It always uses the word *agapao*, God's supernatural love flowing through His faithful people.)

In the context of Peter Drucker's management and marketing philosophy, Pastor Warren's emphasis makes perfect sense. The new relational guidelines are designed to build group loyalty, teach "respect" for all opinions, and block unpopular truths that expose error and corruption. The latter are simply too divisive. "Fellowship" between spiritually diverse people is all important, even if it clashes with God's Word [2 Cor 6:14-18] and forces believers to compromise. That's why many committed but heartbroken Christians are leaving the "seeker-friendly" churches they have faithfully served. They simply cannot agree to discard "offensive" Biblical guidelines in order to pursue the new vision of unity and community.

God's people must heed their Spirit-taught conscience. If we claim His name and promises, we had better follow His ways rather than our feelings or popular marketing schemes. If our worship is an expression of our human nature rather than His truth and Spirit, it is worthless. It's all too easy to "quench the Spirit" and become blind to His light. Trying to make Christianity more acceptable to the world, we may forget Jesus' sobering warnings to His disciples:

"If ye were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen ye out of the world, therefore the world hateth you..." John 15:19-21

"Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from every appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and may your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he

knowledge their weaknesses, and ask for help and prayer." [1, page 139]

But, in the context of church growth and MIT's general systems theory, this prescribed authenticity fits right into LCC's transformational process:

"The gospel of Christ calls us to this kind of authentic transparency. Jesus modeled this self-awareness. He knew who he was... his purpose in life. He knew how his culture influenced him.

"Small groups of many kinds provide a safe setting for individuals to think out loud about themselves.

"Individuals who want to master the discipline of mental models begin by committing to a growing sense of self-awareness. This allows them to identify their mental models and test them against reality." [3, page 118]

The next two quotes place confession and authenticity, first, into an interfaith context and, second, into the overall process of Soviet brainwashing. Confession and authenticity has been vital to both.

"We think of **confession** as an act that should be carried out in secret, in the darkness of the confessional.... Yet the reality is that **every human being** is broken and vulnerable.

"Vulnerability is a two way street. Community requires the ability to expose our wounds and weaknesses to our fellow creatures." [6] [Look at Scott Peck's teaching in "The Different Drum: Community-Making and Peace" (<http://www.crossroad.to/Excerpts/books/church-growth/scott-peck.htm>)]

"...classes had virtually stopped. Varieties of 'learning' meetings were taking up all the time. The students were working on confessions, as were many of the faculty members.... "Meetings were being held in vacant rooms and open spaces wherever a group could gather to discuss, self-criticize, and confess." [7] [Read more about this process in Brainwashing and "Education Reform" (<http://www.crossroad.to/Quotes/brainwashing.html>)]

Edward Hunter wrote his book on Soviet-style brainwashing after numerous personal interviews with victims of the Chinese "EDUCATION REFORM." These survivors include Western missionaries, prisoners of war, teachers, and business men who were trained through cruel but sophisticated "brainwashing" tactics to betray their nation, embrace dialectic materialism, "confess" lies, and serve the Communist propaganda machine. In the end, he shows how some were able to resist the process.

In today's **Church Growth Movement**, **RESISTERS** are usually sifted out fairly early in the process. In the next installment, we will look at some of the ways non-conformists are assessed, exposed, vilified and dismissed from the church family they have loved, served and supported.

"... in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

"...and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, deceiving, and

The first two begin with

- ▶ "What do you think...?"
- ▶ "What do you feel...?"

None of the questions point to the Scriptures, instead all focus on subjective elements of Pastor Warren's five Purposes. They free members of the group to identify with subjective feelings and bond without fear of correction, no matter what their beliefs or lifestyles.

Since the **40 Days of Purpose program is only the first step** in a non-ending process of group learning, it does little more than open the door, begin the training in dialectic thinking, demonstrate the oneness achieved in a facilitated encounter group, and build a hunger for more of the same kind of unity. Apparently, the majority of participants become so attached to the group (and to the unifying process) that they continue either with the same friends or in a new group with others whose lives have been "transformed."

Now take a look at the aims and ways of this process as explained in LCC. Notice its roots in Dr. Senge's unbiblical agenda for changing the world: "Senge identifies **three key practices**

for teams engaging in the practice of dialogue:

1. **"Participants Agree to Describe their Assumptions.** ... *True dialogue allows team members to examine one another's assumptions. As this unfolds, participants often develop new insights into the personal assumptions that they bring to the process.*" [3, page140]
2. **"Participants Agree to Treat One Another as Colleagues.** ... *Senge observes that 'dialogue can occur only when a group of people see each other as colleagues in a mutual quest for deeper insight and clarity.' ... This practice serves teams most powerfully when individuals hold differing points of view.*" [3, page141]
3. **"A Facilitator Holds Group Members to their Commitment to Dialogue.** ... *Most groups overuse (discussion).... Changing this tendency ... requires commitment, practice and assistance. A facilitator can strengthen the group member's ability to use dialogue by helping them establish ground rules and calling them back to the rules when they slide from dialogue into discussion.... 'Mastering the skill of dialogue is a painstaking process.... Dialogue is risky because it requires a high level of transparency and vulnerability from all participants, especially the team leader. ... dialogue significantly increases a team's ability to achieve the results that God desires.'*" [3, page 142]

The next quote from *The Purpose Driven Life* illustrates the positive perceptions of small group fellowship. In a Biblical context, it would represent the very best of Christian fellowship:

"In real fellowship people experience authenticity. Authentic fellowship is not superficial, surface-level chit-chat. It is genuine, heart-to-heart, sometimes gut-level sharing. It happens when people get honest about who they are and what is happening in their lives. They share their hurts, reveal their feelings, confess their failures, disclose their doubts, admit their fears, ac-

that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thessalonians 5:19-24

Music-driven evangelism

"The style of music you choose to use in your services will be one of the most critical (and controversial!) decisions you make in the life of your church," wrote Rick Warren in an article titled *Selecting Worship Music*. "You must match your music to the kind of people God wants your church to reach.... The music you use 'positions' your church in your community. It defines who you are.... *It will determine the kind of people you attract, the kind of people you keep, and the kind of people you lose.*" [20] Emphasis added

Pastor Warren's choice in music flows with today's major currents of change — in culture and business as well as churches. Our world is becoming increasingly uniform even as our choices multiply. While we have countless options in food, books, religions and music, the vast networks of corporate management systems around the world follow the same marketing strategies. Their key to "measurable success" is monitoring and manipulating the "felt needs" of the masses — a shrewd strategy that requires continual polls, surveys, assessments and digital data systems. Together, as parts of a holistic system, they not only expose the wants and vulnerabilities of "consumers" everywhere but also nurture and manipulate those "needs" and cravings.

And it works! That's why governments, schools, medical systems and large churches are all reinventing themselves in order to follow the established tracks of corporate America. They may call their particular version of this system Total Quality Management, Outcome Based Education or Purpose Driven Churches; it doesn't matter. All follow the same pragmatic blueprint, aim for "measurable results," call for teams, dialogue, facilitators, "lifelong learning," contracts and continual assessments of "progress" toward the planned outcome. All must conform or leave the system.

In PART 1, you see that Pastor Warren polled his congregation to discover the most popular contemporary music.[2] Now he uses more sophisticated surveys and tracking software. As you saw in Part 1, one of his management consultants is CMS, a "full-service custom marketing and communications agency" that helps its "clients **grow their businesses.**" [6] It explains that "...collecting, organizing and managing data is essential to understanding, evaluating and planning of any successful promotion." [8]

So when Pastor Warren offered the music most people wanted, they flocked to the church. But "measurable success" doesn't prove that God ordained or inspired this particular plan. In fact, God warns us not "to seek to please men" [Galatians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:4]. Popularity in the world has never been a sign of God's approval. More often — throughout the Bible as well as history — popularity proves the opposite. "If you were of the world, the world would love its own," said Jesus. "Yet because **you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.**" John 15:19 When Pastor Warren tells us that "*God loves all kinds of music*" and that "*God loves variety,*" [2] do you wonder where he would he draw the line? Would that vital dividing line bend with our changing culture? Or with the growing toler-

ance for all kinds of spiritual and Scriptural variations? These are crucial questions, for music has become a driving force in the Church Growth Movement.

As Pastor Warren says,

"Music is an integral part of our lives. We eat with it, drive with it, shop with it, relax with it, and some non-Baptists even dance to it! The great American pastime is not baseball - it is music and sharing our opinions about it!"

"...when I read about biblical worship in the Psalms, I see that they used drums, clashing cymbals, loud trumpets, tambourines and stringed instruments. That sounds a lot like contemporary music to me!"

"Saddleback is unapologetically a contemporary music church. We've often been referred to in the press as 'The flock that likes to rock.' We use the style of music the majority of people in our church listen to on the radio." [20] These statements beg at least two responses. First, Pastor Warren wrote: "...in the Psalms, I see that they used drums..." [20] None of the standard Bible translations mention drums, but they do mention *timbrels* which are sometimes translated *tabrets* or *tambourines*. Apparently, these were small, round wooden rings or frames covered with animal skin and usually carried by women or "maidens" in dance, praise or "merriment." Some Bible commentaries describe them as small hand drums, "examples of which have been found in Egyptian and Mesopotamian excavations." Obviously, they were not like today's large, throbbing percussion instruments which the Bible neither forbids nor approves. Nor were they listed in 1 Chronicles along with other instruments prescribed for temple worship. [21]

SECOND, our Father Himself prepares the hearts of His chosen ones to respond to the saving truth of the gospel and the demonstration of His love. He doesn't need our clever business schemes. "No one can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him," said Jesus. [John 6:44]

But can't God use contemporary music to draw us to Himself? Of course He can! He can use anything He chooses! Again and again, He brings blessings out of our human choices, be they wise or foolish or in between. But His wonderful grace and mercy never justify our disobedience. He repeatedly warns His people to guard against the seductive forces of the world system [Rom. 12:2, 1 John 2:15; Psalm 1:1-3], and "Christian" music now rests squarely in the hands of the world's corrupt entertainment establishment.

Two of the most popular Christian musicians are Michael W. Smith and Amy Grant. Both are under contract to Word Music Company which is owned by Word Entertainment, the Christian Music division of Warner Music Group, a **Time Warner** company. This may explain why some of the popular pied pipers of the church cross over to the other side, drawing millions of fans with them. When that happens, the emotional highs that had been linked to God are transferred to the new themes that exclude God and exalt lust. [22]

Steven Curtis Chapman may be the most famous artist with Sparrow Records, a part of the Sparrow Label Group owned by the British EMI Music Publishing, the world's largest secular music publisher. Having introduced America to the Beatles back in the sixties, it now owns labels such as Capitol,

Organizational Learning, who authored a bestselling book on systems thinking called *"The Fifth Discipline"* which has served as a worldwide guide on social and behavioral change.

"The purpose of dialogue is to go beyond any one individual's understanding" (Senge). In dialogue, each individual's understanding is made available to the entire group so that all learn....

"In discussion, an individual's perspective ... is presented with the objective of persuading the rest of the group.... In dialogue, an individual offers his or her perspective or assumptions for examination by the group. The object of dialogue is to allow others to see what you see and why you see it, not to convince them. Dialogue can create a rich understanding if information is shared openly and if all participants listen deeply.

"This can only be done in a safe environment.... If members of the group expect their views to be disregarded or used against them, dialogue will not occur. Defenses will go up or information will not be fully shared."

[3, page 140]

Did you catch the difference between discussion and dialogue? A good discussion relies on facts and logic — solid information — to present a logical argument that might persuade others that something is true or right. But such a *didactic* discussion clashes with purposes of the *dialectic* group, which trains diverse minds (remember, everyone is encouraged to bring friends) to ignore offensive truths for the sake of unity. Each person must learn to share their hearts *authentically*, to **"listen"** *empathically*, to set aside divisive facts or Biblical standards, and to continually *synthesize* individual views and values into an ever evolving *common ground*. Naturally, this feel-good process blurs God's dividing line between good and bad, truth and error. [See 2 Tim. 4:3-4]

As in Soviet brainwashing (<http://www.crossroad.to/Quotes/brainwashing.html>), **Gestalt therapy** and the popular encounter groups of the sixties, each person must learn to be "authentic" and vulnerable—willing to freely share their personal feelings and confess their weaknesses. To encourage such authenticity, the **facilitator** must build a permissive, non-judgmental or "safe environment." Affirmation, celebration and often an all-inclusive view of God's promises help people feel at home—no matter what their beliefs, lifestyles and values.

But, you might ask, doesn't God call us to unity, empathy and authenticity (purity, honesty...)? Yes, He does. All who are born of His Spirit are one in Him. In contrast, there is no genuine unity between Christians and the world. Yet, God's enemies delight in using God's words in ways and contexts that twist their meanings and deceive God's people. At first, those deviations may seem so subtle that they escape notice. But with each compromise and distortion of truth, discernment lessens and the paradigm shift toward apostasy accelerates. [See America's Spiritual Slide (<http://www.crossroad.to/charts/SpiritualSlide.html>)]

The DIALECTIC QUESTIONS in the back of *The Purpose Driven Life* fit this process.

Small Group Study Guide). Tally the numbers and note the areas that you are doing well in, and the growth areas. In the first few minutes of your group time, challenge the group to go through the same process. ...

"Here is an opportunity for you to model authenticity by sharing with the group where you are progressing and where you need to grow. Whatever the level is of your vulnerability and need for accountability will quickly become the norm in the group."[5]

In a non-threatening way, Pastor Warren has just introduced the group to an essential part of the change process: **CONTINUAL ASSESSMENTS**. The health, growth and progress of every member must be recorded and monitored. **This is where today's sophisticated high tech data systems fit into the Church Growth and Purpose Driven paradigm.** [See CMS in Part 1] Every person, every step forward, every change must be recorded and tracked, analyzed and taken into account.

The same is true of **Outcome Based Education in schools**, Al Gore's attempts at "reinventing government" and Total Quality Management in business around the world. All follow Peter Drucker's worldwide formula for business management.

LCC shows how the vision or purpose works together with continual assessments to accomplish the human and social transformation:

"Suggested Actions to Foster Change. *"Ultimately, momentum for ongoing transformation is a function of two factors: the organization's ability to continually assess current reality, and its ability to create internal alignment around the vision.... "Recasting the vision is best done through periodic assessments with the vision community. They should address whether the vision needs to be revised in order to be consistent with their understanding of God's calling."*[3, page 88]

Commitment to Learning. *...Change leaders should assess the skills of each member and try to create targeted learning experiences at every stage of the change process.*

"Learning experiences must focus on more than transferring information. Team members should have opportunities to discuss new insights with each other. They should be challenged to draw implications from the learning experiences that are unique and helpful to them and their congregation. Critical skills will need to be revisited over and over.... Follow-up presentation and discussion is usually needed. Actual practice in applying the skill, constructive feedback... are essential for skill development."

[3, page 134] Emphasis added

3... DIALOGUE: In the first of his weekly video lesson for leaders, Pastor Warren says, *"I want you to discuss what we talk about each week, dialogue with each other, consider the implications, and plan some action steps as a result. The more you get involved and participate, the more benefit you'll receive from this spiritual growth series in the next six weeks."*

Sounds good and true, doesn't it? Now consider LCC's explanation of dialogue. It quotes Dr. Peter Senge, founder and Chairman of MIT's Society for

Angel, Blue Note, Priority and Virgin. Featuring approximately 1,500 artists, it markets every kind of popular music: rock, rap, jazz, Christian, country...[23] **According to Music Publishing,**

"EMI [owns the] rights to more than one million musical compositions and has offices in 30 countries.... Composers and writers represented by EMI include David Bowie, Janet Jackson, Carole King, Queen, ... Savage Garden, Sting, ... Aerosmith....

"A&R, the art of identifying the next great writer, the next great song, is the single most important function EMI performs."[24]

EMI's website features a page on Social Responsibility which tells us,

"At EMI we believe business should be both profitable and beneficial to society. ... We are committed to equal opportunity for all employees regardless of gender, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability, age, marital status or sexual orientation.... We support and uphold the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights...."[25]

If you read our article, "Trading US Rules for UN Rules," (<http://www.crossroad.to/text/articles/turfur12-98.html>) you will find that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is hostile — not helpful — to Christians and others who question the UN philosophy and its blueprint for global solidarity. (<http://www.crossroad.to/text/articles/solidarity.html>)

In April, 2003, both EMI and Time-Warner executives participated in a conference dealing with topics such as "Things you need to know to get noticed" and "The spiritual future of Christian music." The goal of the first "roundtable," moderated by the Senior Director of A&R, Warner Brothers Records, Christian Division, was to "share what they are currently **looking for in a signed artist** today." [26] Do you wonder if the panelists — including the General Manager of Simple Records, a Senior Director at Sparrow Label Group, and the Director of Gospel A&R and Warner Brothers Records — would allow lyrics that expressed some of the more "offensive" truths of the Bible? Would they even consider *God's will* for Christian music and worship?

Probably not. Their concern is marketing music in cultures around the world. It's up to us to know such as 2 Corinthians 6:14-17, which warns us, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ... Come out from among them and be ye separate...."

In the article, "A New Song - Part 2," (<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/2002/proctor/new-song-2.htm>) author and former musician Paul Proctor summarizes the meaning and purpose of Christian worship:

"As I understand it, worship is coming before the Lord as a holy and 'peculiar people', in obedience, humility, reverence, repentance and faith with an attitude of gratitude, to sing His praises, hear His Word, glorify His name and honor Him with all of our being for Who He is and what He has done.

"Contrary to popular trends, worship is NOT getting together with any-

body and everybody to party in Jesus' name and feel good about ourselves with intoxicating music and psychotherapy." [27]

Saddleback members may not call their brand of music intoxicating, but that's not the issue here. What does matter is the nature of the driving force in the church. It's easy to list a set of Biblical purposes that seem to indicate where the church is headed. But do good purposes or "ends" justify "means" or methods that might violate the standards God gave us in His Word?

The answer doesn't matter to those who embrace pragmatism — the belief that truth is relative and that the ends *do* justify the means. It's sad to see that within much of the Church Growth Movement, the main standard for good or bad methods — or for what "God is blessing" — seems to be measurable success, not obedience to His *actual* Word. The foundational management question seems to be: "Does it work?" We should be asking: "What does the Bible (not preferred paraphrases) tell us?"

The answer to the first question is, *yes, it does work*. But few church members really understand *general systems theory*, the philosophy and worldview behind the controlling systems that steer this worldwide transformation. Many of its enthusiastic supporters don't realize how it squeezes the Holy Spirit out of the decision making process. But we can recognize its mind-changing process by its innocuous labels (they should be red flags) such as *assessments, databanks, facilitator, dialogue* and *planned or continual change*. Lynn Stuter, a respected researcher and columnist with NewsWithViews, summarizes it well:

"Systems philosophy or general systems theory... says that we can *create our future* by building systems and leveraging those systems into balance with all other systems in a conceptually wholistic model, (also referred to as **systemic change**) using a system infrastructure that is analogous to all systems. Scientists refer to systems philosophy as a *syllogism* — **how to bring about planned change systemically**. Under systems philosophy, the system and leveraging of the system into balance with all other systems, is paramount above all else. That leveraging is achieved via analyzing DATA FEEDBACK attained from the subjects of the system established, be it an agency, a classroom, or an individual. This explains the **privacy invasive databanks** being built on all systems — health care, education, justice, military... [*and churches*] "...you start out by developing your *vision* of the created future.... The vision is then defined in terms of *exit outcomes*. In the case of education reform, the exit outcomes are the state essential "academic" learning requirements (EALRs). [*In the purpose-driven movement, it would be related to "purpose"*]

"In the Schools for the 21st Century (the foundation of education reform in Washington state and the basis of American 2000) resource document, *content* is defined as **excellence in terms of the change agenda**; *process* as *the product ... the destination ... what learning is about*; and *emotionality and affectivity* as the means by which content and process will be achieved....

"The measure of that mastery is the *assessment*....If a few children fail the assessment, they are remediated to bring them in line. The assessments

ety. High priority is recommended to maintaining a student mix which includes: Students from urban, small towns, and rural backgrounds.... Broad racial and ethnic representation.... Broad range of academic achievement potential.... Students with diverse and unusual interests.... Representative ratio of males and females....

"Continual assessment of student progress is important in a permanence-based curriculum." [See B-STEP - page 53

(<http://www.crossroad.to/Excerpts/books/mental-health/bstep.htm>)]

In fact, this "learning" PROCESS—whether used in schools or churches—has little to do with knowledge of traditional facts or Biblical truths. Instead it's aimed at developing group skills and "systems thinking" (seeing ourselves and everything else, not as individual people or projects, but as integrated parts of a greater whole). As people *learn* to empathize with each other within the diverse groups, the members gradually *learn* to set aside their old Bible-based assumptions, boundaries and divisive absolutes. The diverse members join their hearts, thoughts and feelings as one. They commit themselves to each other. This new, exciting oneness *feels* good. It also prompts the Christian members to ignore God's solemn warnings concerning compromise, conforming to the world, and being "yoked together with unbelievers." [See 2 Cor 6:12-18] As **LCC EXPLAINS:**

"In an effective team, differences create **synergy**. Rather than staying a safe distance apart, the **close working relationships** within a team **turn diversity into a source of strength**. ... *Team building is the place to begin to embrace the differences that the team members bring.*" [3, page 135]

"In an environment of **trusting relationships, team collaboration** to set performance standards generates **creative tension** for the group.... *The most challenging and potentially most important skill for teams is dialogue. These three skills—teambuilding, performance challenges, and dialogue—will accelerate the entire learning process for a team.*"

[3, page 142] Emphasis added

Yes, those time-tested strategies for social engineering will indeed accelerate the "LEARNING PROCESS." But the "**measurable outcome**" will be the **blinded products of human manipulation**, NOT the Body of Christ taught and established by the Holy Spirit.

2... PERFORMANCE CHALLENGES (or measurable standards). In his teaching video for small group leaders involved in the 40 Days of Purpose, Pastor Warren calls for **HEALTH ASSESSMENTS:**

"Before you get into the video teaching and we start digging into the purposes, we want to take a moment to find out where people are spiritually.... *Your health is never static. It needs to be regularly checked in order to ensure a lifetime of health.*

"The same is true with your spiritual health and that is why we want to begin this second week with a brief "health" check using a simple tool called the **Purpose Driven Health Assessment**. Take a couple minutes... to fill out your own health assessment (found in the Group Resources in the

“Team learning makes active use of the skills associated with mental models. Beyond these, team learning requires

- *close and transparent relationships*
- *an accepted and challenging goal*
- *collaborative approach for sharing and examining information.*

“We refer to these three essential team learning skills as team building, establishing performance challenges, and dialogue.” [3, page 134]

Let’s take a closer look at those **THREE VITAL SKILLS:**

1. TEAM BUILDING.

“Staying on course” involves lots of repetitions. Part of the vision/purpose is an ever-deepening awareness of the collective nature of the group. All must find their place and meaning in the larger body — no matter how much it drifts away from God’s truth and ways. As Pastor Warren wrote in The Purpose Driven Life: “You discover your role in life through your relationships with others. The Bible tells us, ‘Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around.’ [1, page 131]

A few pages later, he adds,

“The Body of Christ, like our own body, is really a collection of many small cells. The life of the Body of Christ, like your body, is contained in the cells. For this reason every Christian needs to be involved in a small group within their church, whether it is a home fellowship group, a Sunday schools class or a Bible study. This is where the real community takes place...” [1,

page 139]

Pastor Warren’s statements illustrate **“systems thinking”** (Phil Wort Diaprax/Police DVD available from Despatch) in a church context. Yes, God wants us to be one with Himself and with each other: one family in Christ, all led by the Holy Spirit according to God’s perfect plan. But when God’s guidelines for His Body of believers are placed into the **context** of a secular management system — and when each member is told to find its “meaning” or purpose in the collective “body” rather than in Jesus Christ, the Head of His body — the Biblical ideal becomes little more than a tool to conform people to an unbiblical process.

Let me try to explain.

In order to be “effective,” the small groups involved in the 40 Days of Purpose must be diverse; they must mix more traditional church members with their invited neighbors and friends who may have no Biblical knowledge at all. This diversity is essential to the planned “learning” process. A 1969 report by the **Behavioral Science Teacher Education Program (B-STEP)**—a brainwashing program established and funded by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare to build global citizens for a socialist world—included two vital requirements: broad diversity and continual assessments:

“If BSTEP is to be functional beyond the specific sample of students it serves, then that sample should be representative of the diversity of American soci-

also assess classroom teachers. The assessment provides DATA FEEDBACK to the system....” [28]

It’s comforting to assume that God loves all growth-producing methods and feel-good stimuli that we love. But it isn’t true.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” saith the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’” Isaiah 55:8-9 Then He gives us a sobering glimpse of what He is pleased to see in His people: *“But to this man will I look: even to him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at My word.”* Isaiah 66:1-2

“For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides Thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways.” Isaiah 64:4-5

The fear of God

Long before David wrote his treasured psalms or King Solomon penned the Proverbs, Job knew the secret of wisdom and friendship with God. In the midst of excruciating pain and loss, he said, “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.” Job 28:28

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” echoed the wise men who wrote Psalm 111:10 and Proverbs 9:10.

Centuries ago, God’s rebellious and presumptuous people thought they could follow their own sensual inclinations, participate in the rituals of their idolatrous neighbors, and sacrifice their children to gain personal favors — without losing God’s favor and protection. Even the priests thought they were following His ways. They were wrong. Our holy God, who is the same “yesterday, today and forever,” warned His foolish and presumptuous people, “Therefore I will number you to the sword, And you shall all bow down to the slaughter; Because, when I called, you did not answer; When I spake, ye did not hear, but did evil before My eyes, and did **choose wherein I delighted not.**”

Isaiah 65:12

Pastor Warren has little to say about such godly fear — the blessed fruit of a deep awareness that God is our Judge and Avenger as well as our Father and Love. God’s anger and wrath don’t fit into today’s affirmative, seeker friendly church environment.

Since Today’s English Version, like the J. B. Phillips version, may be considered a translation rather than a paraphrase, the differences below may be less distinct. Yet, they illustrate a reluctance among many contemporary Christian leaders to use the word “fear” when referring to God. While we certainly must (by His Spirit) reverence our holy and almighty God, this more “positive” word removes any subtle (or embarrassing) reminder that our loving Father is also a “jealous” God — an uncompromising Judge who has little tolerance for our lukewarm “obedience” and self-pleasing “worship.”

KJV: “The secret of the LORD is with them that **fear him**; and he will shew

them his covenant." Ps 25:14

NKJV: "The secret of the Lord is with those who **fear Him**, and He will show them His covenant." Ps 25:14

NIV: "The Lord confides in those who **fear Him**; he makes his covenant known to them." Ps 25:14

LIVING BIBLE: "Friendship with God is reserved for those who **reverence him**." Psalm 25:14a

KJV: "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that **fear him**, in those that **hope in his mercy**." Ps 147:11

NKJV: "The Lord takes pleasure in those who **fear him**, in those who **hope in his mercy**." Ps 147:11

NIV: "The Lord delights in those who **fear Him**; who put their **hope in his unfailing love**." Ps 147:11

TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION: "He takes pleasure in those that **honor Him**; in those who **trust in His constant love**." [page 71]

In other words, the word "fear" clashes with today's attempt to market God to the postmodern masses. To a lesser degree, so do the words "righteous" and "merciful." Both remind us of our sin and inadequacy. They bring the discomfiting suggestion that God indeed is "holier than thou" — an unpleasant notion for those who prefer to believe that God *is* and *thinks* like me.

Instead, Pastor Warren introduces a more likeable God — a smiling father who resembles today's permissive parent rather than the righteous and merciful God of the Bible. Whether you are part of God's family or not, Warren speaks confusing half-truths that assure you that — "the moment you were born into the world, God was there as an unseen witness, smiling at your birth... your arrival gave him great pleasure." [1, page 63]

· "You are a child of God, and you bring pleasure to God like nothing else he has ever created. The Bible says, 'Because of his love God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his children — this was his pleasure and purpose.'" [1, page 63-64]

· "God enjoys watching every detail of your life, whether you are working, playing, resting, or eating." [1, page 74]

Do you feel good about yourself yet?

Do you feel comfortable before your holy God?

Perhaps we feel too comfortable. Maybe our holy God doesn't "enjoy watching every detail" of our lives. Although His Word assures us that He delights in us when we trust and follow Him, it also shows us that He grieves over our foolish choices. And if we indeed have been "born again" of His Spirit, we would grieve with Him whenever we obey our own lusts rather than His Word! We would repent — turn around and run back into His arms!

Yes, He waits for us. Yes, our patient and merciful Lord continues to love us deeply and eternally. Yes, in Christ, all our sins were nailed to the cross. But He doesn't minimize our natural rebellion as we do. Instead, he tells us to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; "for it is God who works in

[3, page 135] Emphasis added

VISION or PURPOSE: The continual focus of the group must be its **vision**. Pastor Warren uses the word "**purpose**" instead of vision, and—while it may line up more closely with a mission statement—it serves the same unifying purpose as the organizational vision, written to inspire and motivate all members to flow with the planned transformation process. In its chapter on "Discerning and Communicating the Vision," *LCC* states,

"Our definition of communicating the vision is a comprehensive, intentional, and ongoing set of activities that are undertaken throughout the transformation process to make the vision clear to the congregation. ...

"Rick Warren reinforces this theme when he says, 'Vision and purpose must be restated every twenty-six days to keep the church moving in the right direction [2, page 111].'" [3, page 62]

Pastor Warren is more than faithful to that rule. The first lesson in *Small Group Study Guide* for the 40 Days of Purpose deals primarily with the word, *PURPOSE*. Its focus is not on God but on "**the consequences of not knowing your purpose**." It warns the group that "**without knowing your purpose, life will seem TIRESOME... UNFULFILLING... UNCONTROLLABLE**." Instead of studying the Bible, the group receives a lesson on the importance of "**purpose**."

According to the group study guide, "*knowing the purpose of your life will -*

- "*give your life FOCUS*."
- "*SIMPLIFY your life*."
- "*increase MOTIVATION in your life*."
- "*PREPARE YOU FOR ETERNITY*."

In short, Warren is putting "first things first," just as *LCC* recommends: "**Vision** is a description of God's preferred future of the congregation in three to five years. One of the *Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*, according to **Steven Covey**, is '**putting first things first**.' This is the practice of allowing our long-term objective (vision) to guide our short-term actions (implementation). It also involves the discipline of **staying on course by avoiding unimportant diversions**." [3, page 81]

The long-term objective is **COLLECTIVE TRANSFORMATION**. This transformation includes unity and readiness to flow with the changes ahead. The people "stay on course" together by keeping their hearts and minds focused on the common vision. That vision is like the carrot dangling in front of a horse's mouth. It motivates the horse to move forward in a particular direction. There's no final goal other than ongoing and unhindered transformation and conformity—i.e. continual change. And each part of the group or community must be so focused on the carrot (stated purpose or vision) that together they embrace whatever new "mental model" (new worldview, paradigm or way of seeing reality) the facilitator or pastor presents. The group or collective must learn to think and follow as *one*.

That means a new kind of *learning*. As *LCC* tells us,

To validate this definition, the authors point to 1 Corinthians 12: *“Paul declares that though we are many parts, we are one body.”* [3, page 128] But this Scripture *only* applies to the Body of Christ. It doesn't refer to the diverse members of small groups or teams made of believers and unbelievers who learn to empathize and identify with each other's values and lifestyles. During the last century, this dialectic process based on **Georg Hegel's occult philosophy** (<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/2003/occult-rpg.htm>) was embraced by **Marx, Lenin** and other socialist leaders. Today it's the centerpiece of all the world's management systems. It's purpose — which is *not* to nurture God's people—is to conform all minds to a global pattern for uniform “human resource development” in schools, business, governments and churches around the world.

[See Reinventing the World (<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/Reinvent1.htm>) and Solidarity (<http://www.crossroad.to/text/articles/solidarity.html>)]

In *LCC, we read*: “In a team... a **common goal** is set. These goals can only be achieved through the mutual, cooperative efforts of the members. ... A second distinction... is *accountability*. ... In a team, **each individual is responsible to the rest of the team.**” [3, page 131]

In Saddleback terminology, the “common goal” would be the common “purpose(s).” And in the *40 Days of Purpose study guide*, each group member agrees to be held accountable by signing a “Group Agreement.” It begins with this statement and three points:

“We agree to the following values:”

- Clear Purpose: Grow *healthy* spiritual lives by building a *healthy* small group community
- Group Attendance: Give priority to the group meeting
- Safe Environment: Help *create a safe place* where people can be heard and feel loved (no quick answer, snap judgments, or simple fixes).

This contract matches *LCC's* demand for group values or team guidelines. Rick Warren knows how to trade unpleasant words like “rules” for softer words such as “values.” But in this context both words refer to same requirement: guidelines that all must follow:

Establish Values to Guide Team Interactions.

“Before a team is launched, ground rules need to be established. Team members bring many unexpressed assumptions about what is and is not acceptable in group interaction. ... Openness, consensus, mutual respect, creativity, and diversity are some of the typical values of effective teams.”
“... the importance of declaring a value and enforcing it repeatedly. Mastering team learning will be difficult if values are not made explicit.

*“Another value to establish is the team's **boundary conditions**. These define the outer limits of acceptability for new ideas.... In some congregations, an underlying value is that only denominational programs and priorities can be considered. This and other similar boundaries should be exposed and discussed by the group. Doing so will help establish the team's values...”*

you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12-13
 The New Testament brings some sobering reminders of a side of God we often prefer to forget. Take the story of Ananias and Sapphira. They were part of the early church community where people shared their belongings with each other. You probably remember the story:

“Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. “And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?... Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So **great fear came upon all...**

“Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. “And Peter answered her, ‘Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?’ She said, ‘Yes, for so much.” Then Peter said to her, ‘How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.’ “Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. **“So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.**

“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people....” Yet **none of the rest dared join them**, but the people **esteemed them highly**. And **believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes** of both men and women....” Acts 5:1-14

God didn't hesitate to judge a sin that we might easily overlook. After all, Ananias made a generous contribution to the church, didn't he?

But God's standard for holiness among His people is far higher than we are led to believe in our churches. He wants a purified Body, a holy Bride — washed and cleansed by His shed blood. Seeker-services that bring the world into His sacred places compromise His revealed purposes. So does consensus-based fellowship between believers and unbelievers, between His purity and the world's profanity.

In the early church, God's judgment [above] spread “great fear.” The surrounding community showed two typical kinds of responses. While “the people esteemed them highly,” only those whom God was drawing to Himself were added to the church. “None of the rest dared join them.” It doesn't sound like today's marketing strategies, does it?

The problem is not that Pastor Warren left out the “the fear of God.” He can't possibly teach all God's instructions in one book. The problem is lack of balance. By emphasizing God's delight in “every detail of your life” through most of the book while rarely mentioning God's anger, holy standard or judgment, he virtually denied the less comforting side of God's nature.[29]

While God's love is unconditional, His promises are not. Most are linked — often in the same passage they appear — to guidelines and conditions for

their fulfillment. But those conditions and warnings are generally left out. As presented in this book, many of God's promises to those who — by His grace and Spirit — follow Him become, instead, universal and unconditional assurances to everyone who reads the book. No need to "mourn" our sin, "tremble at His Word," or repent of our addiction to contemporary thrills, for everyone is okay in the eyes of Him who "passionately" loves all of us as we are.

But God calls us to know and follow *His* ways, not ours — and to deny ourselves and let the "flesh" be put to death. In our weakness, He will enable us! Our goal must be His goal: that we would be holy as He is holy. Pastor Warren affirms that truth, but by softening God's revelation about Himself and His ways, he distorts our understanding of holiness. By trivializing the authority of God's Word, he bends our view of God's high standard for our lives in Him. Finally, when he quotes (in various forms) God's promises while ignoring His warnings, he builds presumption, not genuine obedient faith. Many readers would hardly even know what to obey!

They won't find answers when they turn to the discussion questions in the back of the book. Those questions are patterned to fit today's consensus process. This process for conforming individuals to the group's views, involves guidelines such as:

- **Don't offend anyone** by taking an uncompromising stand on truth or facts.
- **Don't use words such as** "I know" or "I believe." Instead use words such as "I think" or "I feel" which show your willingness to compromise and bend your views to fit the group consensus. [See *Twisting Truth by Group Consensus* (<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/TwistingTruth.html>)]
- **Show respect and appreciation for all positions**, even those that clash with the Bible.

Most of the questions fit this pattern. Subjective and open-ended, they invite feeling-based opinions, not Scripture-based truths. And some of the questions beg answers that fit today's communitarian ideals more than truth.

True to form, the first two questions begin with "What do you think...." and "What do you feel..." None looks to the Bible as a reference point. None encourages the reader to seek answers from God's Word.

The natural outcome of this comfortable, relational dialogue is a group synthesis of the various opinions. In the end, everyone would feel good about themselves, about each other and about God — no matter how He might be portrayed. No cost, no self-denial, no separation, no offense! Postmodern Christianity fits right into the changing world system. (This relational process will be discussed more fully in Part 2 of this series.)

Remember, His ways are not our ways! He is the sovereign King of the universe! To know and follow Him, we need to fill our minds with His true Word, not popular interpretations or feel-good group affirmations. Our wise and wonderful Lord says,

"He that *hath* My commandments and *keepeth* them, he it is that loves Me: and he who loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.... If a man love Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make Our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not My sayings...." John 14:21-21

This book — we will refer to it as *LCC* — presents the dialectic process as part of a system. Its main model is Saddleback Church, where dialectic groups are led by facilitator-leaders trained in the psycho-social strategies of collective change.

The *LCC* shows us that the dialectic group doesn't operate in a vacuum. It's part of a system that controls the planned transformation with top-down standards for group values, relational skills and "service learning." It provides surveys, assessments and data tracking systems that continually measures "change" and monitors conformity to the set pattern. And it follows the same Total Quality Management model embraced by governments, corporations, education systems, the United Nations and other organizations around the world.

LEADING CONGREGATIONAL CHANGE (LCC) was written by James H. Furr, Mike Bonem, and Jim Herrington in 2000. Its publisher, Jossey-Bass, has been working closely both with the Peter Drucker Foundation (**now called Leader to Leader**) and the **"Christian" Leadership Network founded by Bob Buford**. The latter serves as an international tool for guiding large churches through the process of "congregational transformation."

Its references to Rick Warren include these comments:

"We thank Rick Warren... for the opportunity to reach and refine our understanding of congregational transformation as part of Saddleback Valley Church's Purpose-Driven Church Conference. We are also grateful to Bob Buford.... and others at Leadership Network for the many ways in which they have stimulated and facilitated our work.

"We were deeply influenced by Bill Hybles and Rick Warren and the successes of their congregations. We also saw many applications in Peter Senge's "The Fifth Discipline" (1990) and in John Kotter's Leading Change (1996)." [3, Acknowledgements]

"Pastor Russ Osterman... had an opportunity to attend a seminar at Saddleback Community Church in California. Seeing and experiencing the model of a dynamic congregation that was truly reaching uncharted people had a deep impact on Russ, and he returned to Glenwood a changed person. He had no experience in change leadership and no road map for how to lead congregational transformation.... [he] began to lead his church to embrace a new model based on what he had learned." [3, page 28]

That new model, demonstrated by Saddleback Community Church, is outlined in *LCC*. While the "change" process involves numerous complex "skills" and strategies such as *vision casting, system thinking, creative tension, self-assessment...* we will only look at those that specifically relate to small groups here.

Let's start with the new meaning of "small group" (or "team").

LCC defines it as

"a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable." [3, page 128]

wonderful truths; now people *dialogue* until they reach an emotional form of unity based on “*empathy*” for diverse views and values. Dr. Robert Klenck gave an excellent description of this process in his article, “What’s Wrong with the 21st Century Church?” <http://www.crossroad.to/News/Church/Klenck2.html>”

“Total Quality Management [TQM] is based upon the Hegelian dialectic, invented by Georg Wilhelm Freidrich Hegel, a transformational Marxist social psychologist. Briefly, the Hegelian dialectic process works like this: a diverse group of people (in the church, this is a mixture of believers (**thesis**) and unbelievers (**antithesis**), gather in a facilitated meeting (with a trained facilitator/teacher/group leader/change agent), using group dynamics (peer pressure), to discuss a social issue (or dialogue the Word of God), and reach a pre-determined outcome (consensus, compromise, or **synthesis**).

“When the Word of God is dialogued (as opposed to being taught didactically) between believers and unbelievers... and consensus is reached – agreement that all are comfortable with – then **the message of God’s Word has been watered down** ever so slightly, and the **participants have been conditioned to accept** (and **even celebrate**) **their compromise** (synthesis). The new synthesis becomes the starting point (thesis) for the next meeting, and the process of continual change (innovation) continues.

“The fear of alienation from the group is the pressure that prevents an individual from standing firm for the truth of the Word of God, and such a one usually remains silent (self-editing). The fear of man (rejection) overrides the fear of God. The end result is a “paradigm shift” in how one processes factual information.”

In the past, God’s unchanging Word was the ultimate test of right and wrong and our goal was knowing God’s will and aligning our thoughts to His truth. Now the goal is to bond diverse people into a “family” that must “respect” all kinds of Biblical interpretations and contrary opinions—even when conclusions clash with the Bible. The old guidelines for discussion were based on God’s call for *agapeo* love, kindness, patience and scriptural integrity. Today’s ground rules are based on humanistic psychology and manipulative guidelines for social transformation, “relational vitality,” emotional unity and collective synergy.

Sounds complex and implausible, doesn’t it? That’s why Christians are being drawn into the dialectic process with little understanding of the real transformation that takes place both in churches and in individuals who participate in the new “*systems thinking*” and “*outcome-based*” or “*purpose-driven*” learning process.

Perhaps the best way to explain this transformation is to show some of the ways Pastor Rick Warren’s small group process matches the change process outlined in a book titled “*Leading Congregational Change*” (LCC). This book, largely inspired by Saddleback’s success, gives us a detailed look at the change process itself. “*This is a book you ought to read before you change anything,*” said Rick Warren in his hearty endorsement.

In Part 2 we will look at

UNITY AND COMMUNITY. Pastor Warren seems to emphasize a model that reflects Peter Drucker’s communitarian vision and Dr. Bernie Siegel’s New Age view of the healing community. See note This new way of doing church (based on marketing strategies, human relationships and group diversity) is changing churches around the world according to a specific plan. “Traditional” Christians — those who love God’s Word and seek fellowship based on unity in the Spirit, not on human consensus — will either leave their changing church or be asked to leave. They no longer fit! Because they take an uncompromising stand on Biblical absolutes, they block the planned transformation and hinder the needed “unity in diversity:” a new kind of fellowship, not in Christ, but through Christians and non-Christians dialoging together toward an evolving global consensus. See The Mind-Changing Process

TRANSFORMATION: Rick Warren promised, “The next 40 days will transform your life.” [1, page 10] In many postmodern minds, this **transformation** has little to do with rebirth through the Spirit of God. Within the CGM, the word “transformation” often refers to people and churches being conformed to the new “relational” vision of “community.” This change uses the latest psycho-social strategies and intrusive technologies for measuring change and individual compliance with the stated “vision.”

As soon as possible, we will start a glossary of terms used by today’s self-proclaimed “change agents” who lead the way in church transformation. (see Re-Inventing the Church”).

SPIRITUAL GIFTS. Pastor Warren says, “Begin by assessing your gifts and abilities. Take a long, honest look at what you are good at and what you’re not good at. Ask other people... Spiritual gifts and natural abilities are always confirmed by others.”

To validate his point, he quotes Romans 12:3b (Phillips). [1, page 31] While the Phillips translation may seem to support his conclusion, the standard translations do not. They tell us to guard against inflated views of ourselves (pride) — a hidden sin encouraged by today’s emphasis on self-esteem, mutual affirmation and reluctance to speak truths that might seem offensive. Nor do the standard translations support the contemporary notion that spiritual gifts can be identified, tried and measured according to our natural abilities or subjective opinions. God gives these supernatural gifts! If we, His sheep, “hear *His voice*” and have the faith to follow His personal guidance, we will surely know where we can best serve Him and give Him all the glory.

KJV	NKJV	NIV	Phillips
“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ” Rom 12:3	“I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly , according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Rom 12:3	“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.” Rom 12:3	“Try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities.” Rom 12:3 b

God often gives us spiritual gifts that have little or nothing to do with natural abilities, so that we would serve Him out of our weakness rather than our strength. That's what He taught me. Writing and speaking was totally unnatural and extremely painful for me when God first called me to communicate His gospel to children. A shy, quiet introvert, I learned to depend fully on Him. And through the years, my wonderful Shepherd proved His faithfulness again and again in amazing ways. Paul said,

"I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of God. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. "And I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. "And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

ENDNOTES:

1. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002). See "Driven or Led?" <http://www.crossroad.to/HisWord/verses/topics/driven.htm>

2. Dennis Costella, FOUNDATION Magazine, March-April 1998. <http://www.fundamentalbiblechurch.org/Foundation/fbcstdlbc.htm>. You can find a very similar message in Rick Warren's article titled "Selecting Worship Music" (July 29, 2002) at <http://www.pastorport.com/ministrytoday.asp?mode=viewarchive&index=18>.

The Bible warns against a musical "variety" or usage that serves paganism: "when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up." Daniel 3:7

3. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), page 62.

4. <http://www.pastors.com/aboutus/>

5. Ken Witty, "Peter Drucker's Search for Community," *Business Week Online*, December 24, 2002. http://www.businessweek.com/bwdaily/dnflash/dec2002/inf20021224_6814.htm

6. http://www.christian-ministry.com/aboutus_who.htm

7. <http://www.christian-ministry.com/clients.htm>

8. http://www.christian-ministry.com/services_promo.htm

9. Error! Hyperlink reference not valid., http://www.sunlandneighborhoodchurch.com/articles_view.asp?articleid=1382&columnid=

10. "A Biblical Worldview Has a Radical Effect on a Person's Life," December 1, 2003, <http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePress>

[Release.asp?PressReleaseID=154&Reference=A](http://www.crossroad.to/PressRelease.asp?PressReleaseID=154&Reference=A). I have been told that Mr. Barna is becoming skeptical about the Church Growth Movement, which he earlier supported. [See Re-Inventing the Church] I can see why. His own statistics show the tragic consequences of "cheap grace" and salvation prayers without a Biblical foundation.

11. Gene Edward Veith, "Unbelieving 'born-again,'" *World on the Web*, Dec. 6, 2003, http://www.worldmag.com/world/issue/12-06-03/cultural_4.asp

12. "Peter Drucker on the Church and Denominations." This pdf file is posted on the Leadership Network website at <http://www.leadnet.org/allthingsln/archives/neffax/1.pdf>

13. Dr. Robert Klenck, "The 21st Century Church" at <http://www.crossroad.to/News/Church/Klenck3.html>

14. God's moral law can neither save us nor give us the strength to obey its guidelines. But it gives us a standard for right and wrong — and it helps us to understand God's holiness, righteousness, mercy and grace.

15. Many echo this belief: "Sin is a normal part of life, and I'm just as good as everyone else — maybe a little better. Besides, God loves me as I am." While this statement is partly true, it's also misleading. The essence of God's character is not only love. It's also unbending justice, indescribable holiness and perfect righteousness. Without balanced information about God, we can neither know or follow Him.

16. "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." Deuteronomy 4:1-2. See also Deuteronomy 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6 and Revelation 22:18-19.

Small Groups & the Dialectic Process

PART 3...

"The importance of helping members develop friendships within your church cannot be overemphasized. Relationships are the glue that holds a church together." Rick Warren [2, page 324]

"This book is about a process, not programs.

It offers a system for developing the people in your church and balancing the purposes of your church.... I'm confident the purpose-driven process can work in other churches where the pace of growth is more reasonable....

*"Saddleback... grew large by using the **purpose-driven process**...."*

Healthy churches are built on a process, not on personalities."

Rick Warren [2, page 69, 70]

★

To understand the meaning of "HEALTHY" in this context,

see The UN Plan for Your Mental Health

<http://www.crossroad.to/text/articles/MentalHealth2-99.html>

*"Encourage every member to join a small group," says Rick Warren. "... Not only do they help people connect with one another, they also allow your church to maintain a 'small church' feeling of fellowship as it grows. Small groups can provide the personal care and attention **every member deserves** no matter how big the church becomes.... In addition to being biblical, there are four benefits of using homes:*

- *They are infinitely expandable (homes are everywhere);*
- *They are unlimited geographically (you can minister to a wider area);*
- *It's good stewardship (you use buildings that other people pay for!) releasing more money for ministry; and*
- *It facilitates closer relationships (people are more relaxed in a home setting)."[4]*

While we don't deserve any of God's gracious blessings, small groups do bring people together. So the issue here is not whether or not they are effective, but rather the *nature* of their effectiveness. Do they deepen our faith in God or our dependence on each other? Do they teach us to know and follow God's Word or do they promote subtle forms of compromise for the sake of unity in diversity? Do they encourage Biblical discernment or open-mindedness and tolerance for unbiblical beliefs and values? Finally, are they *led* by the Holy Spirit or *driven* by *well-trained facilitators* and the *"felt needs" of the groups*?

Today's facilitated small groups or teams are not like the old Bible studies many of us attended years ago. Back then, we *discussed* the Bible and its

tion [what Pastor Warren calls spiritual gifts and abilities], place them and equip them for service, and enable them to work in the harmonious and productive whole known as the body of Christ.” [9]

In other words, the church and the world become partners in today’s grand experiment of educating human resources for a unified global society. Yes, we must love one another and care for the poor. But we cannot conform to the world system. Nor can we use the world’s psycho-social strategies (cloaked in Biblical terms and phrases) without twisting God’s Word and turning our backs to Jesus Christ, our only true source of unity. Remember God’s warnings:

“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, ‘He taketh the wise in their own craftiness,’ ”and again, ‘The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.’ Therefore let no one glory in men.” 1 Corinthians 3:18-21

“...strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matthew 7:13-14

ENDNOTES:

1. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).
2. Rick Warren, “Relationships hold your church together.” <http://www.pastors.com/article.asp?ArtID=3917>
3. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995).
4. God’s moral law can neither save us nor give us the strength to obey its guidelines. But it gives us a standard for right and wrong—and it helps us to understand God’s holiness, righteousness, mercy and grace.
5. We are not to be “driven” by anything. Instead, we need to “run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross....” Heb. 12:1-2
6. “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from among them and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters.” 2 Corinthians 6:12-18
7. “But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. “Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, “knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.” Tit 3:9-11
8. See “The Global Quest for Solidarity” at <http://www.crossroad.to/text/articles/solidarity.html>
9. *The Business of the Kingdom*, Christianity Today, November 15, 1999.

17. “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Cor. 2:14

18. See “Church Management and Global Missions.” In the fall of 2003, Pastor Warren introduced the Saddleback “P.E.A.C.E. Plan —” a strategy to have every small group in our church, and then tens of thousands of small groups in other churches, become engaged in solving the five biggest problems in the world: Spiritual Lostness, Lack of Godly Leaders, Poverty, Disease, and Lack of Education.”

“We believe it is part of the beginning of a Spiritual Awakening, a Global Movement, a New Reformation,” wrote Pastor Warren. “The PEACE Plan will address these five ‘giant’ problems by Planting new churches... Equipping leaders... Assisting the poor... Caring for the sick... and Educating the next generation....”

“The bottom line is that we intend to reinvent mission strategy in the 21st century. As I stated, this will be a new Reformation. The First Reformation returned us to the message of the original church. It was a reformation of doctrine - what the church BELIEVES. This Second Reformation will return us to the mission of the original church. It will be a reformation of purpose — what the church DOES in the world.”

God calls us to share His love and resources with the poor and needy. But if Pastor Warren’s PEACE Plan means training church leaders to trust and follow the world’s management and marketing strategies as he does (see Part 1 and 3), he will be serving man’s global agenda, not worshipping God. See *Reinventing the World* 19. Today’s emphasis on “passion” and excitement can be misleading. In the King James Bible, passion refers to the suffering of our Lord on the cross. But other standard translations equate passion with “lust” or “inordinate affections.” For examples, see Acts 1:3 (NKJ) and Colossians 3:5 (KJV or NKJV): “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

20. *Selecting Worship Music* by Rick Warren at <http://www.pastorport.com/ministrytoday.asp?mode=viewarchive&index=18>. Since the Bible doesn’t mention drums, it neither affirms nor forbids it. But other Scriptures help us understand God’s view of the use of a throbbing drum beat. Aside from numerous Old Testament warnings against imitating the enticing rituals and practices of pagan and animist “neighbors” (who might have used the speed and volume of

rhythms to induce trance possession), Romans 14:15 tells us that “‘Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love.’” Pastor Warren freely admits that the introduction of rock music has been offensive to many Christians in his church. To draw young people, he chose a popular vehicle that would agonize and chase many away. That choice, in itself, seems to violate God’s law of love — a principle Pastor Warren will emphasize repeatedly in the context of small groups and building the new sympathetic consensus community.

21. 1 Chron. 15:16-24; 16:4-6, 42; 25:1-6. page 978-979. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 1981), 978-979.

22. Word Music - about at

<http://wordmusic.com/about/>

23. “Nokia and EMI form strategic alliance to offer innovative range of music services”

24. Music Publishing, <http://www.emigroup.com/publishing/i-.html>

25. Social Responsibility Policy at <http://www.emigroup.com/enviro/srpolicy.pdf>

26. INDUSTRY and ASSOCIATES

April 5-10, 2003

27. A New Song - Part 2

28. Lynn Stuter, “Who Controls at the Local Level?” <http://www.learn-usa.com/er018.htm>

29. Pastor Warren does mention God’s wrath on page 232, but without a prior explanation of what might be considered “sinful.” Instead, the reference to “wrath” fits into the relational context of “service” and “helping others” — a Biblical command that is now being conformed to the global concept of community service and “service learning.” This kind of organized “service” focuses on felt needs and dialogue and often rules out spiritual needs and Biblical truth. This will be explained more fully in PART 2.

NOTE: “Hope is as essential to your life as air and water. You need hope to cope. Dr. Bernie Siegel found he could predict which of his cancer patients would go into remission by asking, ‘Do you want to live to be one hundred?’ Those with a **deep sense of life purpose** answered yes and were the ones most likely to survive. **Hope comes from having a purpose.**” Rick Warren [1, page 31] This illustration suggests that a secular or New Age hope serves the same purpose as the Spirit-given hope we have in Jesus Christ. There can be no true hope or unity unless we stand on the unchanging truth of God’s Word!

Social Change & Communitarian Systems

PART 1B...

This background information helps explain the collective purposes behind “discovering your spiritual gifts,” continual assessments, signed contracts and small groups facilitated by leaders trained in the dialectic process

Community Connections : Warren says, ‘I read everything Peter Drucker writes. His book *The Effective Executive* is a favorite I re-read every year. Long before words like ‘empowerment’ became popular, Peter was telling us that the secret of achieving results is to focus on your strengths, and the strengths of those you work with, rather than focusing on weaknesses. In fact, Peter says, making strengths productive is the unique purpose of organization.’

The Business of the Kingdom (by Tim Stafford, CT): “Peter Drucker told Forbes magazine that ‘pastoral megachurches’ are ‘surely the most important social phenomenon in American society in the last thirty years.’ Bob Buford, a cable-TV businessman who pioneered Leadership Network for large-church leaders, says this is ‘way ahead, out on the thin branches. Tell me how many people, even in the churches, believe it.’

“In 1991 Drucker told an audience of church leaders that American churches are in the midst of a remarkable renaissance. ‘This, to my mind, for my lifetime, is the greatest, the most important, the most momentous event, and the turning point not just in churches but perhaps in the human spirit altogether.’... Drucker is known as a management guru.... Many would call him the world’s pre-eminent management thinker. Oddly, this management expert has little management.” <http://www.ctlibrary.com/ct/1999/nov15/9td042.html>

This is just a rough, unfinished (no endnotes yet) ***introduction to a very revealing set of links:***

Today’s Biblical illiteracy, which is well documented by George Barna (<http://www.crossroad.to/charts/church-statistics.html>), has left churches vulnerable to countless marketing ploys and psycho-social strategies that lure God’s people away from His narrow ways. Cloaked in theological terms and Biblical promises, the new highways become all the more alluring.

Keep in mind, there is far more to the current *paradigm* shift than meets the eye. For example, behind Saddleback’s mostly clean Christian image hides a plan for global transformation and social restructuring that is hard to imagine. The sophisticated church assessments and data technology that help Christians “discover their spiritual gift” and prepare for ministry fit right into the communitarian visions of trained leaders and facilitators inside and outside the church.

ship.... If you do not fulfill the membership covenant, you are dropped from our membership. We remove hundreds of names from our roll every year.”

[3, page 54]

“Rick’s Rules of Growth.” First, there is more than one way to grow a church.... Second, it takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people. Thank God we’re not all alike! God loves variety.... Third, never criticize what God is blessing, even though it may be a style of ministry that makes you feel uncomfortable.” [3, page 62]

“When a human body is out of balance we call that disease... Likewise, when the body of Christ becomes unbalanced, disease occurs.... Health will occur only when everything is brought back into balance. **The task of church leadership is to discover and remove growth-restricting diseases and barriers so that natural, normal growth can occur.**” [3, page 16]

“God blesses churches that are unified. At Saddleback Church, every member signs a covenant that includes a promise to protect the unity of our fellowship. As a result, the church has never had a conflict that split the fellowship. Just as important, because it is a loving, unified fellowship, a lot of people want to be part of it! ... When God has a bunch of baby believers he wants to deliver, he looks for the warmest incubator church he can find.”

[1, pages 166-167]

Does He? could cite many examples of the opposite—including my own experience. Actually, both His Word and factual history suggest that our Lord has countless ways of training new believers. Many of His most fruitful children are born [of the Spirit] and nurtured in the crucible of unthinkable challenges. Unlike church growth leaders and contemporary “change agents,” God doesn’t standardize His methods or measure His triumphs by the world’s definitions of success, unity or solidarity.

Keep in mind, today’s Church Growth Communities are anything but friendly to members who question the secular church marketing systems, the continual personal assessments and the digital data systems that measure “relational energy.” Many are quick to “discipline” and drive out those who refuse to join the small group dialogues or sign their contracts. We will look more closely at this part of the CGM management system in Part 3.

The heartbreaking testimony of those who have been forced to leave these fast-changing churches remind us that a community that squeezes people into its worldwide marketing mold can be more dangerous to Biblical faith and understanding than no “church” community.

This program is not about Biblical unity and community. Nor do Saddleback and other CGM churches have a monopoly on oneness. In fact, unity (or solidarity) is the ultimate aim of some the most powerful secular management systems around the world,[8] and their eminent communitarian guide, Peter Drucker, pursues the same organizational goals as Rick Warren. Referring to the church’s responsibility to serve and meet welfare needs within its community, Drucker says,

“The pastor, as manager, has to identify their strengths and specializa-

"You are a part of God's family, and because Jesus makes you holy, *God is proud of you!* The words of Jesus are *unmistakable*: '[Jesus] pointed to his disciples and said, 'these are my mother and brothers. **Anyone who does the will of my Father** in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!'" Matthew 12:49-50 [1, pages 121] Emphasis added

Those statements raise some questions.

FIRST, is God *really* "proud" of us? Any or all of us? Isn't it *His* righteousness, not our own, that makes *His* people holy? Jesus gave us an answer long ago. Not wanting His disciples to "think too highly" of themselves and their own "good deeds," He told a parable about the role of a servant, which ended with this question: "*Does he [the master] thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'*" [Luke 17:9-10] Paul knew that truth well. Confident that anything good in him came from God, not himself, Paul could fully delight in God's victory on His behalf: "*God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*" Galatians 6:14 [5]

SECOND, does Matthew 12:49-50, the Scripture Pastor Warren used to prove his point, even relate to that particular point? Do all Pastor Warren's readers *know* the revealed "**will of my Father**" or might they be misled by the many Scriptures that have been taken out of context? And when Pastor Warren misuses God's Word, might he not build a false foundation for Christian unity?

There can be no true or lasting unity *unless that unity is based on God's uncompromised Word*. When churches embrace the same psycho-social strategies as those used by public schools for multicultural training—and also by governments and corporations in "community-building" for social solidarity—they must twist or hide contrary Scriptures such as 2 Corinthians 6:12-18.[6]

You cannot please God when you rely on the world's methods for success. When churches re-interpret and adapt parts of the Bible to postmodern perceptions and "felt needs," they shift their foundation from God's wisdom to man-made rules and strategies. One of those strategies is simply to rule out contrary Biblical warnings and to "discipline" or expel concerned and faithful members as "divisive." [7]

Church discipline is Biblical, and I'm glad Pastor Warren upholds it. But when a Biblical principle is used in unbiblical ways to remove obstacles to a worldly process, it cannot bring Biblical success. It is hard to separate all the good things Pastor Warren says from some of the amazing distortions, but God tells us to "'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from every appearance of evil.'" [1 Thessalonians 5:21-22] So please consider these statements:

"All prospective members must complete a membership class and are required to sign a membership covenant. By signing the covenant, members agree to give financially, serve in a ministry, share their faith, follow the leader-

The new "systems" view of the world focuses on a three-member partnership between the corporate sector, the governmental sector and what's now called the third or "social sector" (which includes churches). Each would be made up of managed "systems" — all interconnected through networks, standards and leadership training. The basic blueprint for these vast networks was prepared by Peter Drucker, the communitarian mastermind behind the "systems theory" (<http://www.crossroad.to/glossary/church-growth-mission.htm>) of how to manage *everything*.

Drucker called Rick Warren *'the inventor of perpetual revival*, [44] and Saddleback Community Church is a starring example of the success of his pragmatic theories. The following links and quotes expose some of the connections and philosophies that drive the Church Growth Movement:

1... The Drucker Foundation: (<http://www.crossroad.to/News/> <http://drucker.org/about/press-releases/L2L-institute.html>) "The Drucker Foundation worked to realize a vision of the social sector as an equal partner of business and government based on the belief that a healthy society requires three vital and effective sectors working together to change lives. The Leader to Leader Institute will build on the Drucker Foundation legacy by pursuing its mission in three primary goal areas: **developing social sector leaders of character and competence**; forging **cross-sector partnerships** that **deliver social sector results**; and providing leadership resources that engage and inform social sector leaders."

2... The Leader to Leader Institute Vision 2010: "The Leader to Leader Institute will chart the future path for the **social sector** to become the **equal partner of business and government** in developing responsible leaders, caring citizens, and a **healthy, inclusive society**. [*This is where the small groups and dialectic process enters in*]

"The Foundation will bring the best leadership and management voices *from* across the world *to* people of the world with a focus on providing social sector organizations with the ideas and tools that enable them to better serve their customers and communities.

"The Leader to Leader Institute [*the former Drucker Foundation*] will realize this vision by... spotlighting social sector innovations and teaching the generic lessons of leadership and management to all three sectors.... Packaging knowledge and experience into **tools for social sector leaders** in critical areas such as: fund development, **marketing, volunteer management**, [*This is where the surveys and assessments of spiritual gifts and talents fits in*] **collaboration, self-assessment**, innovation, and **measuring results**...."

3... Emerging Partnerships: New Ways in a New World: "A Symposium organized by The Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management, sponsored by **The Rockefeller Brothers Fund**....

"The Drucker Foundation believes that a healthy society requires three vital sectors: a public sector of effective governments; a private sector of effective businesses; and a social sector of effective community organizations [the focus is on large churches]. The mission of the social sector and its organizations is to change lives. It accomplishes this mission by addressing the needs of

the spirit, the mind and the body—of individual, the community, and society....

“As government cuts back social spending, many people expect the social sector to absorb much of the anticipated need for services....

“The one million nonprofit organizations... that comprise the social sector have only one common characteristic—their tax exempt status. It is their diversity—in mission, philosophy, and community—that uniquely qualifies them to deliver effective services to the community. ... We are now talking about a true partnership to **build community** and **produce people** who are needed by healthy businesses and a **healthy society**.”

The large community oriented and purpose-driven churches fit right into the new communitarian (http://www.crossroad.to/Quotes/brainwashing/third_way.htm) model for organizing institutions and monitoring people. That’s why the Rockefellers are involved. (*To see the Rockefeller continual support for globalist and socialist programs the last century see The Revolutionary Roots of the UN* (<http://www.crossroad.to/Excerpts/Chronologies/un.htm>))

The Lilly Endowment, “a private foundation...that supports community development, education and religion,” has also helped fund the Drucker Foundation. But more recently, it has shown its support for Baptist leadership and pastoral training. Strangely enough, the two — Druckers communitarian vision for the “social sector” and seminary training in community-building — fit together. The article, “Golden Gate Seminary Receives \$300,000 Lilly Endowment Grant tells us that the funds would provide “hardware, software, renovations and training needed to fully integrate up-to-date technology” with the seminary’s training program.

This grant makes all the more sense in light of a new **partnership** between **Golden Gate Seminary** and **Saddleback Church**. The Baptist seminary will build a new branch on the Saddleback campus to train church leaders to use the digital data tracking technology needed to meet and monitor community needs around the world. [“Saddleback, Golden Gate Launch Partnership for Educating Laity”]

The next link sheds additional light on Golden Gate Seminary’s postmodern orientation:

4... Church Growth Scholar Advocates Radical Change in New Millennium: (By Cameron Crabtree) “The evangelical church in **North America must undergo radical change with new kinds of leadership in order to fulfill its redemptive mission in the postmodern context of the next century**, a church growth scholar told conference participants at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

“‘This ongoing process of dying in order to live should not unnerve us if we are reading the scriptures right, for crucifixion followed by resurrection is at the very essence of the ministry of Christ,’ said Eddie Gibbs, professor of **church growth** at Fuller Theological Seminary.

“Speaking during the annual meeting of the **American Society for Church Growth** at **Golden Gate Seminary’s** Mill Valley, Calif., campus, Nov. 12-14, Gibbs warned **churches must embrace transitions** or ‘forfeit the possibility of

“systems thinking” [see Church Growth Glossary] and collective church management. As Pastor Warren says,

“For unity’s sake, we must never let differences divide us. We must stay focused on what matters most—learning to love each other as Christ has loved us, and fulfilling God’s five purposes for each of us and his church. Conflict is usually a sign that the focus has shifted to less important issues, things the Bible calls “disputable matters.” When we focus on personalities, preferences, interpretations, styles or methods, division always happens.” [1, pages 161-162] That sounds good. We should *not* focus on personalities, preferences, styles or methods. Yet Pastor Warren seems intensely focused on his structured *methods* for church transformation, and he communicates those methods to churches around the world as if they came from the Bible, not business schools at Harvard and MIT.

The bigger problem with the above declaration is another word Pastor Warren tucked into his list of “less important issues:” the word, “interpretations.” Today’s trend toward contextual interpretations of God’s Word (adapted to fit the context of the popular culture) twists its meanings into pleasing messages tailor-made both for the unbelieving world and for the worldwide ecumenical movement. And Pastor Warren’s pragmatic “interpretations” seem designed to block any Biblical argument against either the mind-changing process that *drives* the fellowship or the management methods that *drive* his church. Let me repeat his misleading statement concerning boundaries on what kinds of topics and issues can be discussed:

“A purpose statement reduces frustration because it allow us to forget about things that don’t really matter. Isaiah 26:3 (TEV) says that God “give[s] perfect peace to those who *keep their purpose firm* and put their trust in [him]. [Italics in the original] A clear purpose not only defines what we do, it defines what we do not do. ... The secret of effectiveness is to know what really counts, then do what really counts and not worry about all the rest.”

Keep in mind, the standard translations of the Bible don’t use the word “purpose” in this verse. Wouldn’t you rather keep your heart and mind focused on Jesus and His Word instead of on the purposes defined by Rick Warren?

KJV: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, **whose mind is stayed on thee:** because he trusteth in thee.” Is 26:3

NKJV: “You will keep him in perfect peace, **whose mind is stayed on You,** because he trusts in You.” Is 26:3

According to Pastor Warren, the focus must be on relationships and unity—the kinds of relationships that help you “feel good” about yourself and your group. Divisive issues (which might include anything controversial from the anti-Christian teaching in public school to books and popular entertainment) are frowned on, no matter how important to your family’s faith and values. They don’t fit Saddleback’s five purposes! They might even conflict with the affirmative church atmosphere and cause people to feel uncomfortable. In contrast, Pastor Warren proclaims a more positive message—one that fits today’s educational emphasis on self-esteem:

Biblical faith of tortured believers brought multitudes of fellow prisoners—even cold-hearted inquisitors and torturers—to Christ. Yes, our visible God-given love for one another demonstrates a divine gift that the world craves but cannot duplicate. But only the Truth of the gospel (*doctrine*), made alive by the Spirit, can spark that same divine life and love in another person. “Love” without Truth cannot bring unbelievers into God’s Kingdom.

In the last of the five quotes, Pastor Warren equates the “time” we give to our friends with Christ’s life-changing sacrifice for us. This principle begs questions such as: Must our “sacrifice” be prompted and accomplished by the Spirit or does any kind of “sacrifice” of time count? What if this sacrifice glorifies the human giver, not God? Could it tempt us to idealize “good deeds” such as the unselfish works of Mother Teresa, a Catholic nun who embraced a universalist view of God and the cross? She said she saw “Jesus in every person” (most of her patients were sick and dying Hindus)—a compassionate notion but totally contrary to God’s Word.

Without Biblical doctrine and a clear understanding of God’s Word, it’s all too easy to define love (love for God, love for people...) in human terms that *contradict* God’s own teaching about Himself and His eternal moral law.[4] We might simply apply the world’s definitions for love, compassion, relationships and sympathy to concepts that deal with spiritual realities. Then we applaud each other for meeting our own nice-sounding standards, forgetting that our own human efforts are nothing but “filthy rags” in God’s sight. Isaiah 64:6

The prophet Isaiah understood that well. What counts is not our cultural view of what is right, but knowing and following *God’s ways*, which differ radically from ours. Remember Isaiah 55:8-9 and Isaiah 64:4-5, where God reminds us to remember Him *according to His ways*—according to what He has revealed about himself, not according to our own shortsighted perceptions, good intentions, wishful thinking or noble ideals (or visions). If our relationships rest on human aims and organizational strategies rather than on Biblical faith and the Holy Spirit, they are worthless to His kingdom.

When we minimize God’s Holy Word and guidelines, we blind ourselves. When we conveniently blur the line between what God calls right and wrong, we won’t even know that we’ve missed the mark. And when we dismiss Biblical guidelines as old fashioned “doctrine,” we become vulnerable to timeless deceptions that shift the ground of our thinking from His unchanging truths to sound-alike myths and illusions—as God warned in 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

But Pastor Warren’s statements make sense to a postmodern generation that values human relationships more than truth. After all, God’s absolute, unbending Word (*doctrine*) *does* bring division. It cuts a dividing line between truth and error. “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12

Such piercing truth is incompatible with the oneness needed for the new

exercising a **transformational ministry** within changing cultures.’

“In the **shift from a modern era** emphasizing rationality and unified progress **to a postmodern era** characterized by **pluralism**, ambiguity and **relativism** the church is facing a context in which former concepts of self-identity and purpose are being challenged.

“‘The **church itself will need to go through a metamorphosis** in order to **find its new identity in the dialectic of gospel and culture**,’ he said. ‘This new situation is requiring churches to approach their context as a **missional** encounter.’

“He said the cultural changes with which church leaders must grapple are: -Global. “There is nowhere to run to.” -Rapid. “There is no time to reflect.” -Complex. “There is too much information to absorb.” -Comprehensive. “They affect every area of life.”

Did you notice how the second paragraph puts the crucifixion into a new context? The current “metamorphosis” of the church has nothing to do with the crucifixion! Instead, it adapts the heart of the gospel to a human agenda, putting God’s unchanging Word into a postmodern context. As Pastor Warren does throughout *The Purpose-Driven Life*, it *contextualizes* Biblical truth, using it to validate its message rather than to preach the Word.

To “embrace transitions” churches must embrace Georg Hegel’s dialectic strategies. This process, embraced by Marx, Lenin and Stalin, uses the tension between opposites (*thesis* and *antithesis*) to create *synthesis* and prepare people for change. This dialectic process involves continual social change following a pre-planned purpose. [See Reinventing the World Part 2: The Mind-Changing Process and Popular Occultism (<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/2003/occult-rpg.htm>)]

Bob Buford, the founding chairman of the **Peter F. Drucker Foundation** for Nonprofit Management (now titled “Leader to Leader Institute), made his management strategies available to Pastor Rick Warren and Saddleback years ago. Among the sermons offered for sale at Pastor Warren’s website, <http://www.pastors.com/>, is a 1997 sermon credited jointly to Rick Warren and Bob Buford titled, “Leaving a Legacy.”

Buford left his top role at the Drucker Foundation to found **Leadership Network**, which seems to serve as a virtual arm of the Drucker Foundation offering management theories, training and technology to large churches around the world. Through its global network of large churches, Buford has been bringing Drucker’s management structures to pastors and church leaders around the world. His website, leadnet.org, tells us more:

5. To Everything There Is a Season: “Leadership Network moved to Dallas and has grown to be a primary resource to which 21st century congregations and church leaders turn for information, innovation, and networking. Under Brad’s leadership, our services expanded to include networking the next generation of church leaders through the **Young Leaders Network** and the **Terra Nova** project. We launched the Leadership Training Network that has focused on equipping and releasing the laity in ministry and service. Our large church

forums have grown to include urban as well as suburban churches and a new network is focusing on **missional** church leaders who are pioneers in **community transformation**."

Did you notice the word "missional" again? It was used in the earlier statement by Eddie Gibbs, professor of **church growth** at Fuller Theological Seminary who spoke at the Golden Gate Seminary. Let me repeat his explanation: "'The church itself will **need** to go through a **metamorphosis** in order to find its new identity in the **dialectic** of gospel and culture....' This new situation is requiring churches to approach their context as a **missional** encounter.'" In other words, the dialectic process (facilitated small groups) must synthesize (blend) the two opposites: "gospel and culture."

That's wrong! Jesus Christ, our Lord, made a clear distinction between the two. He tells us to be "in the world" but not "of the world." God's holy gospel and the world's corrupt culture are incompatible. They cannot be synthesized! [2 Cor 6:12-18] God's people must not conform to the unholy world. Yet the dialectic process is driving both Saddleback and other compromising churches further from the truth and closer to the world. [Romans 12:2]

In the past few years, the postmodern vision of the "missional Church" has spread underground like a cancer. One of its "missionary centers" is Regent College in Vancouver Canada former "home" of Professor Eugene Peterson, author of *The Message*: (http://www.crossroad.to/Bible_studies/Message.html) **6... Congregational Resource Guide** [Regent College, Vancouver]: "With the current decline of mainline churches in our pluralistic culture, **the 'professional' pastor has become ineffective** and must give way to **the 'missional' pastor**. *Effective Church Leadership* defines and lists the major resources of a missional pastor-leader. The reader will find practical help with the **four central tasks of a missional leader**: helping people rediscover power in the whole of their lives; helping people **become communities of reconciliation**; helping people discover meaning in everyday life; and helping people discover how they can make a difference. The missional pastor helps church members discover who they are now on the mission field, **their specific mission tasks** [that's why they must "discover" and "develop" their "spiritual gifts"], and the central convictions about ordinary life in light of the gospel. The author gives practical insight into how pastors and key leaders can **transform themselves and their communities** of faith into vibrant and true mission outposts. A plan for pastoral evaluation and an evaluation worksheet are included."

The next two links show the same collective "transformation" — based on the same psycho-social strategies — in a secular context. Both articles are written by Rick Smyre, President of **Communities of the Future**. Both indicate the need to motivate the masses to accept the planned transformation. The standard process for motivating people is embrace this collective change is to exaggerate the gap between the current crisis and a lofty vision of an ideal future. In the Purpose Driven Paradigm it would be the gap between a current inadequacy and the noble purpose or vision of future perfection. The worse the present condition — and the higher the envisioned goal — the greater the

entertainment may be seen as obstacles to the envisioned unity, they are often discouraged, if not banned. As Pastor Warren says, "A purpose statement reduces frustration because it allows us to forget about things that don't really matter." [3, page 87] Of course, anti-Christian public education and popular entertainment *do* matter—even if "change leaders" refuse to recognize their influence on our children.

4... Package truth in ways that make it palatable and pleasing to everyone, members, unbelievers and seekers alike. Avoid offensive Scriptures and divisive warnings. De-emphasize Biblical absolutes or "doctrine." They hinder unity and "continual change."

5... Use signed contracts, the dialectic process and continual assessments to hold all members accountable to the kind of fellowship mandated by the purpose-driven management system.

Saddleback Church models these five points and many other practical guidelines for church growth and unity, which we will look at later. But first, let's consider Pastor Warren's teachings on the Body of Christ - the fellowship of believers. While his book is full of encouraging assurances and promises, it also hides some strange half-truths and troubling suggestions. The first quote below fits right into the new collective or *holistic* view that all parts of an organization (the *system*) must be interconnected—and that individuals only have worth and meaning according to their place in the *whole system*. (This *holism* now permeates, guides and unites organizations around the world) With that view in mind, ponder Pastor Warren's next five statements:

"You discover your role in life through your relationships with others. The Bible tells us, '**Each part gets its meaning from the body** as a whole, not the other way around.... But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn't amount to much, would we?'" [1, page 131]

"**The Bible knows nothing of solitary saints** or spiritual hermits isolated from other believers and deprived of fellowship." [1, page 130]

"How you treat other people, not your wealth or accomplishments, is the most enduring impact you can leave on earth. As **Mother Teresa** said, 'It's not what you do, but how much love you put into it that matters.'" [1, page 125]

"God wants his family to be known for its love more than anything else. Jesus said our love for each other—not our **doctrinal beliefs**—is our greatest witness to the world." [1, page 124]

"**Whenever you give your time, you are making a sacrifice** and sacrifice is the essence of love. Jesus modeled this: 'Be full of love for others, following the example of Christ who loved you and gave Himself to God as a sacrifice to take away your sins.'" [1, page 128] (Eph. 5:2 LB)

Do you see the conflicting messages? The imprisoned apostle Paul, a "solitary saint" separated from his fellow believers toward the end of his life, is only one of numerous Biblical examples of faithful men and women who grew strong in faith while *standing alone* and sharing the sufferings of Jesus. Check the Psalms, the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and other persecuted prophets, the Gospels.... Remember that in many Communist prisons, the uncompromising

Unity & Community

PART 2...

"God says relationships are what life is all about." Rick Warren, [1, page 125]

"Relationships are the glue that holds a church together. Friendships are the key to retaining members. A friend once told me of a survey he took in a church. When he asked, 'Why did you join this church?' - 93% of the members said, 'I joined because of the pastor.' He then asked, 'What if the pastor leaves? Will you leave?' 93% said 'No.' When he asked why they wouldn't leave, the response was 'Because I have friends here!' Do you notice the shift in allegiance? This is normal and healthy.... **Think relationally!**" [2] Rick Warren, "Relationships hold your church together."

"I want to stress the importance of continually emphasizing the **corporate nature** of the Christian life to your members," wrote Pastor Warren in his church management manual, *The Purpose-Driven Church*. "Preach it, teach it, and talk about it with individuals. We belong together. We need each other. We are connected, joined together as parts of one body. We are family!"

[3, page 328]

Yes, those *who truly belong to Christ* are one in Him! We are part of a vast wonderful family that reaches around the world and stretches through time into eternity! In fact, the fellowship we have in Christ—with those who share the *same* Spirit, follow the *same* Shepherd and delight in the *same* Scriptures—brings us a tiny foretaste of the joy we will share with our *heavenly* family for all eternity.

But Pastor Warren adds some questionable organizational reasons for emphasizing fellowship and unity. As he explained in his article, "Relationships hold your church together," fellowship among members may be the most effective way to "grow" large and strong churches. So, in the Church Growth Movement (CGM), people-pleasing fellowship—designed specifically to bond spiritually diverse people to each other—becomes a major purpose.

This PROCESS includes the following steps:

1... Continually emphasize the importance of fellowship and unity, commitment (including signed contracts) and community participation. Stress oneness—the "corporate nature" of churches. This is the heart of "systems thinking," whether in secular business or church: everything is interconnected; all is one. Nothing has meaning unless it fits into the "Greater Whole."

2... Create organizational structures for bringing visitors and new members quickly into small groups where trained "change leaders" can facilitate the dialogue, encourage bonding and monitor the collective training.

3... Warn people against neglecting "accountability" to the five purposes (or "mission statement")—which set boundaries for topics to be discussed. Since "divisive" or "distracting" topics such as government education and occult

gap and the more powerful the motivation to change.

7... Building Capacities For Community Transformation: "All local communities are faced with the need to prepare themselves for a **constantly changing, interconnected** and increasingly complex society. This article emphasizes the needs to develop **webs of learners** throughout any community who have the capacity to understand the impact of trends of the future and who work in parallel to community strategic planning....

"Without developing **new capacities for transformation**, communities will continue to try to improve existing ways. It is important to be aware that incremental change and the old ways of doing things no longer work....

"Until an individual sees the need for change, no true change can occur because of the struggle and commitment that is necessary. In addition, until a community environment allows people to be **open to new ideas**, there is no **safe haven** for thinking differently. Finally, until local communities begin to see value in talking about ideas, there will be **resistance** to real change. ...

"No longer fixed and rigid with standardized rules, a pattern of dynamic and constantly changing connections require a **change in our human consciousness**....

"**Transformational change** reflects a **change in the very essence of the institution**, concept, method or technique....

"Focus on building a **core group of community leaders** who have a **passion** for learning. The potential for all communities of the future is to evolve an overall framework of innovation by developing **small networks of learners**."

8... Rewiring a Community's Brain for the 21st Century: Aligning the Cosmic Dance: "The Principles of Transformational Learning. ...Leadership in general will move from top-down direction, prediction, and control of outcomes, to the natural idea of **facilitating and motivating diverse people** in methods of adapting to changing circumstances....The idea of a **shifting context of information** will become the new environment of learning. **All** people will need to become **adept at adaptation**.... A futures context requires that the idea of a 'mindset' be discarded and replaced with the concept of 'mindflex.' **All** learners will need to become **comfortable with rethinking**, reorganizing, and redesigning....

"Those who are able to understand the **changes in context** brought about by the transformation of change will be capable of vitality in a dynamic society....

"Be **open to new ideas** of any kind. **Filter those that do not resonate with an understanding of a new reality**. One of the greatest obstacles to learning within a constantly changing society is the need for **certainty**. The idea of certainty of outcomes will be replaced with the idea of continuity of principles. *[Naturally, Biblical absolutes will seem obsolete. In contrast -]* Certainty of values will be the glue that holds communities together. It will be important for all education and learning to search for, emphasize, and **bring to consensus** a family of **values** *[such as tolerance, unity, inclusiveness]*....

"Establish experiments and receive feedback.... Focus on **collaboration**

among **diverse** people and ideas and allow them to combine in different ways...
Develop a new system of evaluation to judge the **systemic integration** of core competencies, the ability to ask appropriate questions, and the ability to connect disparate ideas in continuous innovation. ...Build webs of learners throughout an organization and community. Understand that **the subpatterns of change will demand a new concept of individual learner**.... The ideas of 'learning webs' will be added to Peter Senge's (<http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/2002/change2.htm>) popularization of the idea of 'learning communities.'"

Let's go back to Bob Buford, founder of the Leadership Network. Buford gave Peter Drucker an amazing compliment in the dedication of his book, *Half Time*. He called **Drucker "the man who formed my mind."** Honoring his mentor, Buford helped fund a 2002 documentary on Peter Drucker's long life. It was aired on CNBC in 2002.

In 1998, Buford wrote chapter 7 ("**How Boomers, Churches, and Entrepreneurs Can Transform Society**") in a "Drucker Foundation" book titled *The Community of the Future* [<http://www.jossseybass.com/>]. In it, Mr. Buford wrote: "There are **three major sectors in American society**: the government, which ensures compliance with laws and allocates resources; the business sector, which proves jobs and fosters economic development; and the social sector, which addresses social and existential needs ("existential" meaning the making of personal choices in the context of a free society). All three sectors must do their part if we wish to create... **healthy, socially functioning communities in the twenty-first century.** ...

"For if we cannot learn to live with each other in vibrant, fully functioning communities, then we will soon have everywhere what we already have to a large extent in the inner city, which is anarchy. And anarchy quickly and inevitably gives rise to tyranny, whether on the right or the left." (page 35)

The Community of the Future, introduces Bob Buford as "founder of Leadership Network, a nonprofit organization that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship among leaders of large churches and parachurch organizations.... He has held leadership roles with the Young Presidents' Organization and the World Presidents' Organization and has been a **moderator of executive seminars at the Aspen Institute.**"

The **Aspen Institute** gained a moment of public fame shortly before sweet little **Elian** Gonzales was sent back to Cuba some years ago. Because the little boy's mind had been corrupted with American thinking, the six-year-old had to go through a mind-changing re-entry process at the Aspen Institute. His little friends were transported to the temporary "school" so that the small facilitated group and the dialectic process could wash his young mind of *individual* thinking and retrain him in *collective* ways.

Founded in Aspen, Colorado, but linked to the British-based Tavistock Institute for Human Relations, The Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies (AIHS) calls itself "a global forum" which "seeks to improve the condition of human well-being by fostering enlightened, **responsible leadership** and by convening leaders and policy-makers to address the **structural changes of the new century.**"

This training center for a global army of psycho-social change agents works through offices in Germany, Japan, Italy and France as well as the United States. Its manipulative conferences and seminars are based in Aspen or at the beautiful Wye plantation in Maryland.

The AIHS website (<http://www.aspeninstitute.org/default.asp>) summarizes its mission and policies in nice-sounding words that few would challenge. For those who look deeper, they reflect the socialist vision of the master-minds behind the world's sophisticated mass psychology and manipulative consensus process — well indoctrinated men and women determined to crush all hindrances to their quest for a new world order: not quite capitalism, not quite socialism, but Communitarianism or the Third Way. Ponder this statement on its program page:

"The *Leading Change* seminar is both intellectually challenging and immediately practical. For example, research indicates that as many as 80% of all change initiatives fail. A major factor contributing to the high failure rate of change initiatives is a natural, deep-seated resistance to change within an organization. Throughout this seminar, senior executives consider **the nature and sources of resistance to change and how to overcome them.** They explore ways of **making the organizational environment receptive to ongoing change** and ensuring that beneficial changes become embedded in culture and practice."

In 1976, the AIHS published *A New Civic Literacy*. It offers a glimpse of the philosophy taught and touted at its global conferences — one that shows alarming sympathies with the manipulative education strategies used by Fidel Castro's team of Communist trainers. The author, Ward Morehouse, writes, "Experimental activities should be undertaken to see to what degree formal learning experiences can shape the world views of Americans so as to make those views more compatible with (or at least less resistant to) adjustments in behavior and attitudes necessary to cope more effectively with problems of interdependence....

"The kind of educational transformation for which we have argued in these pages will not come easily. Changing complex social institutions in any fundamental way requires unlimited quantities of sweat and almost certainly some tears, if not blood." [2]

In light of the above agenda, it's not surprising that the Aspen Institute is funded by globalist foundations such as the Carnegie Corporation, The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (once headed by Alger Hiss) and the Ford Foundation.