Review of message given by Pst. Rick Warren during PDC conference in July 2006 Singapore

This is a review of a message given by Rick Warren during the Purpose Driven Church (PDC) conference which was held in Singapore, in July 2006. It is entitled The Stewardship of Affluence and Influence. The words said by Pastor Rick Warren in his message would be in red while my analysis would be in black.

03:15
God never does a miracle just to show off

And what exactly, may I ask, is the primary reason why God raised up Pharaoh and hardened his heart (Ex. 9:16; Rom. 9:17)?

00:01-07:15
Throughout this message, Warren tried to link the idea of Moses’ staff as being representative of Moses’ identity, income (04:20) and influence (05:30). However, when we look at the passage in context, we can see that the reason why God asked Moses what was in his hand is because there was the only thing he had, NOT because of anything significant symbolized by this staff of his. In fact, in Ex. 3, God had already instructed Moses to go and deliver Israel from Pharaoh. The reason why God asked Moses is because Moses was fearful and refused to go, therefore God gave him some miraculous signs to confirm that He (God) was with him (Moses) throughout this endeavor. Thus, to read this into saying that this passage is talking about God asking Moses to lay down his affluence and influence is eisegesis and thus not based on a proper exegete of the text. In fact, it could even be established from the previous chapter that Moses did not have to even lay down his staff, if he would only obey God immediately after being given orders by God. Thus, the entire ‘sermon’ is wrong.

07:16- 1:24:28
The rest of the message is basically Rick Warren preaching about Rick Warren, and promotion of his PEACE plan, and his fight against HIV/AIDS. From this segment, we can see a few of the purpose driven errors here.

21:40- 22:00
… there is nothing new in the book [the PDL] … that hasn’t been said …. By historic Christianity in the past 2000 years

Eh… well. Read my book¹ for a reply to this.

25:45
If you want to make money, there is a whole lot of easier ways to make money

¹ Chew, Daniel HC (2006), Driven Away by Purpose: An Analysis of the Purpose Driven Life and Related Issues (2nd Ed.), Xulon Press.
Wrong. Anyway heard about the word-faith charlatan Benny Hinn? He’s busy living the high life, from money he gets from his gullible followers.

27:28
One thing which comes across is Warren’s sincerity, which could be the reason why many Christians are deceived. He sounds humble from the pulpit too. Warren indeed is sincere, but sincerely wrong.

29:23- 30:53
Reverse tithers … … give away 90% and live on 10%

Uh…. Why must Rick Warren mention his reverse tithing at EVERY single talk he gives? Does he need to boast on how ‘righteous’ he is in giving God 90%? Anyway, judging from his estimated salary from his book royalties etc, 10% is more than what a lot of people earn even in a year anyway, so what is there to boast? Let him who boasts boast in the Lord (Jer. 9:24), not in their good works.

29:53
… never … in debt to God (with regards to tithing)

Does this somehow seem odd? We tithe out of gratitude, not out of trying to pay God back for what he has done, because simply we can’t do so. Whatever we have belongs to God anyway.

33:16
[Ps. 72] seems very selfish

Psalms 72 i a prophetic psalm prophesying towards the establishment of the Messiah as King of king and Lord of lords, not a ‘bless-me’ prayer, so this problem of the Psalm being selfish doesn’t exist.

33:17 -34:06
… so that the king may care for the weak and the orphan … stand up for … immigrants … The purpose of influence is to speak up for those without influence

I agree that the purpose of influence is to stand up for those without influence. Eh, Mr. Warren, so are you standing up for the rights of the most helpless among us, that of the unborn who are murdered every day throughout the world? Oh, how about the believers who were marginalized because they were purpose resistors? Did you speak up for them when they were shunned by all the churches around them which have all turned purpose-driven? Hypocrite! Your own message condemns you.

36:50
The number one problem in this world is spiritual emptiness. Most people don’t know they are not an accident.
I’m sorry, but that’s wrong. The number one problem in this world is NOT spiritual emptiness; it is spiritual deadness and rebellion. The problem with people is not that they are not purposeful, but that they are rebels under the wrath of God, which is hanging over them every moment they are alive. No wonder we are having such stuff like Purpose Driven synagogues etc.

37:07
Jesus came to die for you so that you will know what Jesus is like

Huh? Is he serious? This is the moral governmental heretical theory of the atonement of Christ. Christ came to paid for the penalty of our sins, and thus bore on His body the wrath of God upon that Cross which we should rightly bear, NOT to show us what Jesus is like.

37:12-37:16
They live lives without meaning. They live lives without purpose.

I would rather live a life without meaning and purpose and be saved from the wrath of God rather than live a meaningful and purposeful life apart from God, thank you.

38:00-38:40
[Second problem] … Self-centered, egocentric leadership …

And what do you expect from unregenerate people? That they behave like saints?

43:40-43:43
There is only one thing big enough to handle these three problems [Extreme poverty, Diseases, Illiteracy] and it is the Church of God

And since when did the Church become a social institution?

44:01
2.3 billion people claim to be followers of Jesus Christ

The only way to get such a high figure is to include the apostate Roman Catholics, and maybe even the liberals and the cults like Jehovah Witnesses. Therefore, the true Church of Jesus Christ is not 2.3 billion strong as of now; that’s a lie.

46:55-47:00
You wouldn’t leave us without a solution [to these 5 problems]

Yes, there is a solution, but Warren wouldn’t hear it. It is called ‘Preach the gospel to every creature’ and the rest would follow if the good news is accepted.

2 Jesus’ Man has a plan (http://www.jewishjournal.com/home/preview.php?id=16029)
Jesus cared for the poor. In fact, in Jesus’ very first sermon, in his hometown, in Luke chapter 4, … the very first verse in the very first chapter of his sermon, he announced his intention; his agenda for ministry … ‘…. Because he has appointed me to preach good news to the poor’

And who exactly are the poor in these verses referring to? The verses are quoted from Is. 61:1-2, where the context is in light of the hope given to those who were left destitute because of the judgment of God upon Israel, with God promising that He would once again come to them in favor sometime in the future. Therefore, when Jesus quoted this passage, he is stating that the year of the Lord whereby God has come to bless His people in Israel has come. The poor in this context thus refers to the poor in spirit (c.f. Mt. 5:3), NOT the physically poor per se. So this point is invalid.

… over 2,000 verses in the Bible about the poor

Funny, I can’t seem to find them, at least not the type that Warren needs to substantiate his goal of transforming the Church into a social institution.

One third of Jesus’ ministry was on caring for the sick. The Bible says that … [Jesus] went about preaching, teaching and healing.

So if I state that I sleep and eat and study today, that mean that one-third of my time would be spent sleeping, one-third of my time would be spent eating, and one–third of my time would be spent studying? It just does not follow! This teaching is thus illogical and thus nonsensical.

Another thing which Warren misses is the reason why Jesus did miracles which included healing the sick. Definitely Jesus has compassion on the masses and therefore healed those who were sick, but the fact of the matter is that the miracles of Jesus were meant to show the Jews He was sent by God.

And the link is? I can’t seem to see any link. Jesus taught the people truths about God. Firstly, it was to everyone, NOT ONLY to the next generation. Second, it was regarding the things of God, NOT just any plain academic subject.

At one point,… the little children to come to Him

---

3 Miracles are done by the prophets to validate them as being sent by God. This was the purposes of the miracles done by Moses. See Ex. 4:1-9 where God told Moses to do these miracles to validate him as a prophet of God. Throughout Old Testament history, this was the case with all the prophets, most notable being Elijah’s confrontation with the prophet of Baal at Mount Camel (1 Kings. 18:20-40). See also Deut. 13:1-5 where the concept that miracles are done to validate the calling of a prophet is implied, and where it also shows that Scripture takes precedence over miracles in evaluating the calling of any prophet.
That situation was one in which he did not educate them, but blesses them.

52:02- 52:16
God expects the Church to do the same things Jesus did while He was on earth: Plant churches, Equip leaders, Assist the poor, Care for the sick, Educate the next generation.

God does expect the Church to carry on the Great Commission which He has given to us, and that does NOT include Warren’s PEACE plan.

52:44- 54:53
Who did Jesus did it (do his ministry)? In Matthew chapter 10 and in Luke chapter 10 … Jesus send out the seventy … with this instructions … When you go into a village, you find the man of peace. He says find the man of peace in the village. … If he blesses you back, you stay with him and you work with him. The man of peace is someone who is open and influential.

This faces the same old problem as the heretic Ed Silvoso. Warren has gone along with the Neo-Apostolic eisegesis in trying to fit Jesus’ instructions of the seventy-two into the context of missions, which is a wrong application of the text.

Here is what I wrote about Silvoso’s use of the passage as his model for marketplace ministry and nation transformation:

Silvoso’s methodology is similarly seriously flawed. The passage he uses [Lk. 10:1:11] to support it is not talking about evangelism, transformation, or anything of that sort. Jesus sent out the seventy-two to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is near. Israel at that time represented the people of God. Therefore, the message of the Kingdom of God was sent to the visible Church in the nation of Israel, as an invitation and proclamation so that they may hear and thus follow Christ, the One they had been waiting for. It has nothing whatsoever to do with nation transformation, and thus Silvoso’s methodology is unbiblical. … verse 9 is not talking about meeting the felt needs of people in the name of the Lord, but to do miracles which are meant to validate the messenger as having a message from God. Since such is the case, Silvoso’s methodology is wrong. (An Analysis of Ed Silvoso’s sermon during the FOP 2006 (5th Aug 2006), available at http://www.angelfire.com/falcon/ddd_chc82/theology/Ed_Silvoso_FOP2006.pdf)

The same critique could be used of Warren’s (mis)use of the Lk 10 and Mt. 10 passages, where he committed the exact same errors as Silvoso. The passage of the sending out of the seventy-two in Mt. 10 and Lk. 10 is NEITHER talking about evangelism nor missions, nor ministry, but about calling the Church of Christ in Israel at that time to acknowledge her Messiah. Thus, Warren’s use of the methodology based on Jesus’ instructions to the seventy-two is based on eisegesis and thus his method is unbiblical.

54:54 – 54:58
The man of peace, or the woman of peace, need not be a Christian.

I guess this is what you get when you treat the passage in Lk. 10:1-11 as your template for doing missions. Needless to say, this is a blatant violation of Scripture in 2 Cor. 6:14-18.
55:05 – 55:11
Why do you say that, Rick? I say that because when Jesus said that, there weren’t any Christian yet.

Well, could this be the fruit of dispensational theology? The Jews were the people of God at that time, for crying out loud. Israel was the Old Testament Church!

57:05- 57:33
... share it [the PEACE plan] with the churches in the purpose-driven network. This is going to bring what I believe in going to be the second reformation of the Church. The first Reformation of the church was about belief; what should the Church believe. We know what we believe today, the problem is we just don’t do what we believe. So the first Reformation was about beliefs, this one will be about behavior.

Second Reformation? Oh well, Warren is free to call it whatever he wants to. As for discerning Christians, we will have no part in this purpose driven madness. A ‘reformation’ which deconstructs and destroys the work of the first Reformation is no true reformation at all. As documented in my book, Warren believes doctrines that are in total opposite to what all the Reformers believe. So how can he say that ‘we know what we believe today’? Skubalon! With flawed doctrines, is it no wonder that the purpose driven disciples do not practice what is right in the eyes of God? Shouldn’t our concern be with keeping and conforming to the standard of the first Reformation before talking about a second one? Also, since Warren invites Roman Catholic churches into his purpose driven campaigns, how can he say that ‘we know what we believe today’?

57:34- 57:48
The first Reformation was about creeds; this one would be about deeds. The first one was about what does the Church know; this one would be about what does the Church do.

Well, such dichotomization is totally wrong. The first Reformation concentrated on creeds, yes. But they transform the lives of individuals and entire cities. Since what we believe greatly determines our behavior, a ‘reformation’ about deeds without a renewed mind is doomed to failure. Next, no, the first Reformation was not about what the Church know, it is about what is the Gospel, and how is Man saved from the wrath of God which burns against us sinners. This then leads to transformed lives as multitudes come to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ through the many missionaries that were sent out from the universities where they trained under the Reformers themselves.

58:25- 58:29
I believe it is time for the church to be the church; to stop debating and to start doing.

Yes, I agree. Stop debating with all the various heretics and compromisers in the church. Just kick them out of the Church until they repent, starting with Rick Warren and company, and then we can start doing what the Church has been called to do, which is NOT the PEACE plan by the way. [Hint: It is found in Mt. 28:18-20 and in Mk. 12:28-31]

58:30- 58:34
Stop criticizing other churches, and start cooperating
And which churches are true churches? Or are all who are call themselves churches to be considered churches? What about the Mormons?

59:25
You know, one drop of water wouldn’t make any difference.

It is written, “One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, just as he promised you.” (Josh. 23:10) and “Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword” (Lev. 26:8). What are numbers in the sight of God? Nothing! Absolutely nothing! Samson was a man gifted by God, who killed one thousand Philistines at one go (Judges 15:15). The tiny nation of Israel herself drove out nations far stronger and more numerous than her in her conquest of Canaan. What matters, therefore, is not numbers, but people totally surrendered to the cause of Christ. Wasn’t it John Wesley, one of the co-founders of Methodism, who once said, “Give me one hundred men who hate nothing but sin and love nothing but God and we will change the world”?

1:00:14 – 1:00:22
When we do what Jesus did, we would see a spiritual awakening; that all the forces of hell couldn’t stop

I didn’t know there was a certain formula to follow for spiritual awakening to happen? Since when was the Holy Spirit dependent on what the Church does or does not do to bring awakening and revival to the Church? Even if we managed to do all of what Jesus commanded us to do in His Word, which is not what Warren would have us do, there is no guarantee of revival. Revival is a sovereign work of God and it would happen only when God wants it to happen; it cannot be engineered based on what the Church has or has not done!

1:03:55- 1:04:04
[God showed me] I [God] am going to take that [country of Singapore] and use it to bless … Asia.

Much has been said on the issue of Singapore being the Antioch of Asia, ad infinitum ad nauseum. Well, I have only one thing to add, Singapore will never be such an Antioch of Asia, to bless Asia with the Gospel, until the Church in Singapore gets her act together.

1:04:35 – 1:05:08
I don’t believe in that [theory of God choosing people to use] anymore. The Bible says that God is looking for people [to use], and if you get usable, He will wear you out.

Sure, God is looking for people to use, but why are these people available for God to use them? Do they somehow make themselves available for God to use them by their own autonomous free will?

1:06:35- 1:07:03
And the second reason why He [God] uses me [Warren] is because I expect Him to. You see, the Bible says ‘according to your faith it will be done unto you’…. the Bible says that ‘the just shall
live by faith’, the Bible says that ‘without faith, it is impossible to please God’. You know why God uses me [Warren]? Because I expected Him to.

This sounds a bit like the charismatic word-faith concept of faith here. Since when does our faith cause God to use us? Our faith has no creative power! Faith only has the ability to perceive God’s calling in the direction God is leading us, not to somehow lead God to use us!

1:08:08 - 1:08:19
You get to choose how much God blesses your life. … You get to choose how much God uses your life …

Huh?!? So God’s blessing is dependent on whether we choose to have it? So if we want God’s blessing in a certain area, we just have to choose to have it and it will be there? Also, if we want to serve God in a certain area, we just choose it to be so and it will be done? This is classic word-faith heresy!

1:10:20 – 1:10:25
If you do [give your all to Christ], you will be blessed far more than you will ever imagine.

Eh, so the motivation for surrendering to Christ is NOT because He is worth it, but because by so doing you will get more blessings? What kind of carnal-minded motivation is that?

1:11:04- 1:11:06
How do you store up treasure in heaven? By investing it in people going there

And where is that found in Scripture? It is not! Storing up treasure in heaven is done by faithfully following the will of the Father, not in investing in people going there. This could be seen in the context of Mt. 6 where Jesus exhorts us to store treasure in heaven. The whole context is talking about God and us humans, and therefore the consistent way of interpretation is that storing up treasure in heaven is something which is done vertically between us as individuals before our God.

Conclusion:

From this review of Pastor Warren’s message, many troubling signs can be seen. Warren’s promotion of the Neo-Apostolic heresy and his subtle hint of an embracing of Word-faith heresy are particularly disturbing. His revivalist tendencies reminiscent of the Pelagian arch-heretic Charles Grandison Finney, together with his neo-liberal socialist tendencies in promoting a new ‘evangelical’ social gospel exposes him as a false teacher. When one includes all the church splits he has indirectly caused by his Purpose Driven Church/Life and 40 Days of Purpose campaign⁴, which implicates Warren of committing the Diotrephesian error (3 Jn. 9-10), there is very much cause for concern. One can only hope that the Church of Jesus Christ would open her eyes to the deception of this heretic and turn back to Christ alone.

With regards to Warren’s sincerity, it can clearly be seen that Warren seems to be passionate about serving God. At least in this sermon, Warren comes across partly as a humble servant of the Lord with God just blessing him with affluence and influence. He also did mention that he did not seek wealth, nor fame or influence, but God just gave them to him. Assuming he is what he has portrayed himself to be from this sermon, it is no wonder that many people who call themselves Evangelicals are fooled. As Christians who are called to be discerning, however, we are called by Christ to discern the fruits (Mt. 7:15-20) and not look on the surface at apparent piety. If discernment is properly and biblically exercised, even if Warren is sincere and means what he says, Warren, through his false teachings and beliefs and improper associations, could be seen to be a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Oh, he is sincere, but he is sincerely devoted NOT to Christ, but to a god of his own making; to a god whom he creates from reading the Bible through the lenses of his unbiblical worldview. He is serving that god, and NOT the true God of the Bible.

However, we do know from the words that he says elsewhere in secular interviews and speeches etc that Warren is not being true in his portrayal of himself in this sermon. On the one hand, he says that he says that he is not seeking fame and influence, yet if then, why should he be yearning to be the pastors of pastors, through setting up his pastors.com website and the Purpose-driven network? Why is he championing the HIV/AIDS cause but not championing the cause of the unborn? Worse still, why is he not championing the best way to solve the HIV/AIDS crisis, which is for sexual abstinence before marriage, marital fidelity, an end to homosexuality and all forms of deviant sexuality, no drug abuse and thus no sharing of needles? Why would he be toeing the liberal line on fighting the HIV/AIDS crisis, unless of cause that truly standing up for Christ in this manner would make him unpopular with the elites in society? So from all this, we can see that Rick Warren is indeed seeking fame contrary to what he says in his message. At the very least, he is ashamed of the Gospel, and Scripture does tell us what the punishment of God is upon those who do such things (Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26). Since he is supposed to be a pastor, such action of his is sufficient cause for him to be removed from the pulpit altogether.

In conclusion, we can see the various errors embraced by and being promoted by Rick Warren. Therefore, Rick Warren is to be marked as a heretic and avoided (Rom. 16:17) because of his embrace and promotion of various heresies, and treated as such if and until he repents of his heresies and sin of schism.

Oh, and just to add one more point for the sake of fellow Christians, if you really care about Rick Warren, encouraging him in his apostasy is the more hateful thing you are doing to him, since he will continue to be convinced he is right. The most loving thing anyone can do for Rick Warren now would be to rebuke him for his errors and hand him over to Satan (1 Cor. 5:5), in the hope that God would break him and turn him back to Christ in repentance for his many heresies, like what God has done in the immoral man who repented (2 Cor. 2:5-8) after being given over to Satan previously. Since such is the case, and since many undiscerning Christians are supporting and even defending Rick Warren, Warren supporters are actually guilty of hating Rick Warren and allowing, and even facilitating him to slide into perdition.