

THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE by Rick Warren

I know I'm a little...okay a LOT...late with this review, but I'm only adding this page to my website today, so this is my first chance to let you know my thoughts on this one.

My former church did The 40 Days of Purpose using this book several years ago. Our pastor promised us that so many people were going to be coming to our church that we were going to have to add seats. In actuality, more than 30 people left the church not too awfully long afterwards (more followed later) and I'm told that seats had to be removed so that the sanctuary wouldn't look so full.

I talked with people of all kinds in the aftermath and found that among the ones that had gone through The 40 Days of Purpose, both in this church and in others, were nonplussed, angry, hurt, indifferent, didn't get it, thought it was okay, and were similarly affected. Some have said they couldn't get into it, thought something was wrong but couldn't put their fingers on it, thought it was of no value, etc. Many churches were divided and eventually lost members because of Mr. Warren's attempt at church growth.

The book is a part of a movement that began years ago, but seems to have only affected my area in recent years, that sought to "grow the church," otherwise labeled as The Seeker Friendly Movement or The Seeker Sensitive Movement. The Emergent Church Movement followed. I won't insult your intelligence by telling you about all of this...you can do the searches and read about them as I did. I found out from others that this was pretty much a taught, scripted program. For instance, "Identify the resisters." "Tell them, 'if you don't like what's going on here, you can leave.'" And it didn't matter that some of those people had been members of their particular churches for many years.

One red flag that I noticed as I read was that Mr. Warren used many different versions of The Bible (and non-bible...explanation to follow.) I thought at first that his "purpose" in this was because so many people use so many different versions, and I suppose that's true, in part. However, I realized later that he used some Bibles that aren't Bibles (okay, here's the explanation.) One of his favorites seems to be Eugene Petersen's *The Message*, which I don't refer to as a Bible because he has taken the Word of God, The Holy Bible, and twisted some of the scripture to fit his needs, obviously in an attempt to make The Bible easier to read. In actuality, that's been done and redone *ad nauseum*. **Compare: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11:**

The Message

Don't you realize that this is not the way to live? Unjust people who don't care about God will not be joining in his kingdom. Those who use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex, use and abuse the earth and everything in it, don't qualify as citizens in God's kingdom. A number of you know from experience what I'm talking about, for not so long ago you were on that list. Since then, you've been cleaned up and given a fresh start by Jesus, our Master, our Messiah, and by our God present in us, the Spirit.

The New King James

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Close, or maybe not so close, inspection will show that these two passages do not convey the same message. Notice Mr. Petersen's vague phrase "use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex, use and abuse the earth and everything in it" is quite different than pretty much any other version you compare to it. That passage in other versions doesn't even refer to the earth.

The Purpose Driven Life started out by saying, "It's not about you," then continued talking about "you" throughout much of the rest of the book. At first I thought, "Okay, that's good. Life isn't all about me. It's about Jesus Christ." Then after reading about all the good works and thinking of others that I should be doing, I realized that maybe Mr. Warren was saying that it's not about me in the sense that it's about Jesus, but it's not about me in the sense that it's about everybody else in the world, more specifically the starving, the sick, the third-world countries, etc. Since reading this book, I've read more about Rick Warren and realize that he seems to be pretty heavily involved with the United Nations (do a search for Rick Warren's P.E.A.C.E. plan.)

You can't really get the real gist of what I'm saying until you read my next book review, the one on **Deceived on Purpose** by Warren Smith. It was a REAL eye opener! (Please don't get the Warrens mixed up. They are definitely not cut from the same cloth.)