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# DISCERNMENT NEWSLETTER

“...how is it that ye do not discern this time?” Luke 12:56

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## Redefining Christianity

### *Understanding the Purpose Driven Movement*

By Bob DeWaay

*“Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps the law.” (Proverbs 29:18)*

**Biblical Vision.** The process of redefining the church includes redefining terms that are found in the Bible. A key term that Rick Warren and his followers redefine is “vision.” The passage cited above is often misunderstood because of this phrase in the KJV, “*Where there is no vision, the people perish*” (Proverbs 29:18a). This is taken to mean, “a corporate idea of an optimal future for the church.” But as the full citation from the NASB shows, we have an example of Hebrew parallelism. The Psalms and Proverbs are full of synonymous and antithetical parallelisms. This simply means stating an idea, then restating it in synonymous terms, or stating an idea and then stating the opposite. Proverbs 29:18 is an antithetical parallelism. The contrast is between different outcomes when there is or is not “vision.” In making the contrast, the terms “vision” and “law” are used synonymously. So the “vision” was God’s vision which is His revealed law.

Many years ago a preacher came to our church and preached on “vision,” citing this passage. His point was that our congregation needed to know what our vision was for our corporate future—how we were going to have an impact on those around us and what we would look like when that happens. His claim was that if we did not have a focused vision for our local church, we would perish. At the time, I did not understand Hebrew parallelism like I do now so I could not see the error of his Biblical interpretation. However, I felt that the teaching was somehow off base, thinking that all churches had the same vision because it had been given once for all by Christ. When I heard that message I lacked a mental image of an optimal future for this organization. All I had was the gospel to preach and the Bible to teach. Now I realize that gospel preaching and Bible teaching ARE the vision for the church, just like the law was God’s vision for Old Covenant Israel.

Rick Warren wrote the forward to Dan Southerland’s book entitled *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through*

*Change*.<sup>i</sup> The book is designed to show pastors how to transition their traditional church into a Purpose Driven one. Rick Warren sells the book on the Purpose Driven website. Some of the chapter headings reveal how heavily it depends on the concept of vision: “Preparing for Vision; Defining Vision; Planting the Vision; Sharing the Vision; Implementing the Vision, etc.” The future Purpose Driven church is what the vision is all about. The vision includes the process of removing people who oppose becoming Purpose Driven. This book is very revealing.

**“What Happened to My Church?”** Reading Southerland’s book will help people whose churches have changed from gospel preaching and Bible teaching churches to “seeker” churches understand what has happened to them. Southerland characterizes those who resist this transition as “leaders from hell” who are of the ilk of Sanballat who resisted Nehemiah.<sup>ii</sup> It is clear that Pastor Southerland is convinced that he is like Nehemiah on a mission from God (i.e. to convert the church to being a Purpose Driven seeker church) and that all who resist are misguided, have evil motives, or are just unwilling to change because of their being caught in traditions.

There is, however, another side of the story. I have heard from many of these “evil Sanballat types” and they are heart-broken over what has happened to their churches. They love the gospel and hunger for solid Bible teaching. Besides being starved spiritually, they are now chastised as being evil doers. This email is an example:

*We were labeled critical and divisive and negative in our Southern Baptist church for pointing out the watered-down gospel and twisting of scripture in the book Purpose-Driven Life. Despite the concerns we raised, our church pressed ahead with their 40 day journey earlier this year and we found it too difficult to attend church over that period, where all the ministries of the church were geared to that study over that time. We have found the lack of discernment very alarming. We are shocked at the weak teaching of scripture we are seeing, the lack of discernment, the ignorance of truth versus error, and the willingness to jump unquestioningly on every popular "Christian" bandwagon that comes along. We are very discouraged as we know of no*

*solid, Bible-honouring, discerning church in our area and wonder what those of us who see these problems are to do. (from Canada)*

Here is another lament from people whose church made the transition:

*We attend a large Baptist, though in reality nondenominational church in the Detroit area. It seems our church, and many, many, others have embraced what I've come to call "Warrenism". . . What's disturbed us is the secularization of our church. It's become more and more worldly, while growing large in numbers. (about 6,000 members). We have felt alone in our uneasiness with the "Warrenistic" culture of our church as it's grown stronger there, but we felt confused about it after some Sunday sermons in support of it. What we see now at our church is not enough evangelism without, and God's House is very worldly within. This is what breaks our hearts. We hear sermons with only vague references to scripture and have a secularized worship service many times. My wife asks me, "shouldn't we be getting nourishment to prepare us for our battles as Christians?"*

My question is this: "Are the resisters really leaders from hell or are they solid Christians who know the difference between the gospel as preached by Christ and His apostles and the Purpose Driven message that is tailored to appeal to the unregenerate and carnal minded?"

What most of these resistant people do not know is that their pastors have been trained in how to deal with them. Their pastors have been taught that "traditionalists" who do not get on board with the new vision will have to go if they cannot be placated or converted to the new paradigm. The reason for this is that the Purpose Driven franchise cannot succeed without conformity to its protocol. That is why Rick Warren makes all members of his church sign a unity covenant.<sup>iii</sup> In his case, his church never was anything but Purpose Driven. The people who have come there mostly do not know the difference between a gospel church and a Purpose Driven church. They are happy to sign unity pledges because they are already convinced the Rick Warren and his processes are from God. But Warren's campaign to convert existing churches to become Purpose Driven creates a far different situation. It displaces thousands of people who know what real gospel preaching and Bible teaching are. They know that the synthetic alternative that pleases the unregenerate

masses is not the same message. They, who were previously the stalwarts of the congregation, are now the "problem people" who have to be dealt with.

This transition is similar to what happens when one franchise company buys another. The employees of the purchased company have been trained in the vision and protocol of that company. The new one has an entirely different corporate agenda. What often happens is that long time, loyal employees of the old company are fired because it is easier to bring in a new "team" that is sold on the new company's ways. This is painful enough in corporate America, but when it happens to a long-standing church that existed to preach the gospel, teach the Bible, and care for the flock, people who are mature, loving Christians find themselves removed from fellowship. They who love their Lord and His Word have, through no choice of their own, become characterized as wicked "resisters" who are standing in the way of what God wants to do.

**The New "Reformation".** Dan Southerland's book reveals in a step by step process describing how to convert one's congregation from a Bible church to a Purpose Driven church.<sup>iv</sup> Rick Warren's endorsement in the forward of the book characterizes what is happening: "An incredible wave of renewal and revival is taking place in these churches that are willing to change."<sup>v</sup> This process is entirely based on the concept of "vision" which includes eight steps that will convert one's church to a Purpose Driven church.

Before the vision process begins, pastors need to be convinced that what they are now doing is failing. Statistics are used to prove that most churches are failing and desperately need to "transition" to the new paradigm. Southerland writes, "According to recent studies, 80 percent of churches in North America are plateaued or in decline."<sup>vi</sup> Church Growth advocates commonly cite this statistic. Southerland further asserts, "In the twenty centuries since Jesus handed us the keys to the kingdom, we have lost our way."<sup>vii</sup> His answer is to "regain" the vision, a process which entails a second reformation: "The second reformation is about methods. It concerns how we should relate to the world around us; how we make the gospel culturally relevant so that men and women everywhere can come to know, love and serve Jesus Christ."<sup>viii</sup>

In these few pages, Southerland tells pastors that they need a reformation and an entirely new model of how to "do church." He thinks (probably sincerely) that this is the Biblical model. Yet he does no exegetical or theological work to prove from the Bible that the Purpose Driven model is that of Christ and His apostles. Yet he asks, "How do we transition the church back to a purpose driven model?"<sup>ix</sup> This is amazingly anachronistic. The Purpose Driven model is based on marketing principles that were not articulated

before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Do not be deceived, the Purpose Driven movement is not bringing us back to something that existed in Biblical times that was somehow lost in church history. This is a new movement that was founded by Robert Schuller in the 1960's. Schuller called for a similar "reformation" in 1982.<sup>x</sup> As discussed earlier, Schuller's "reformation" was somewhat limited because of the difficulty of replicating the Crystal Cathedral. Rick Warren has overcome that shortcoming by creating a model that can be adopted anywhere. Thus the "reformation" that Schuller envisioned in 1982 has been resurrected and restructured by Rick Warren in a way that might actually "succeed."<sup>xi</sup> What we need to decide is whether the Schuller/Warren "reformation" is Biblical or whether it is actually a "deformation."

To confuse this matter even more, C. Peter Wagner is calling for a "new apostolic reformation."<sup>xii</sup> Not to be left on the sidelines, in 1993 a group of feminists gathered at a "re-imagining" conference and proposed a feminist "second reformation" that would push their agenda.<sup>xiii</sup> That makes four "reformations" going on simultaneously. Schuller's reformation is based on self-esteem; Warren's on making the church exist so as to be relevant to unbelievers (which self-esteem teaching does), Wagner's on the emergence of latter day apostles and prophets in the church, and the feminists on the need for a more sensual spirituality.<sup>xiv</sup> One thing they all have in common is the desired end which is church growth through making the church more attractive to the world. Church growth was not an issue during the real Reformation; the Catholic church was growing just fine before Luther.

During a radio debate with a pastor who supports Rick Warren, I suggested that if Warren really believes we need a reformation, he should show in detail what exactly was wrong with the teaching and practice of evangelicalism that warranted a "reformation."<sup>xv</sup> His response cited surveys suggesting that most churches are not growing. Apparently growth is the one issue that fuels this movement. In a later chapter I will show that when Jesus Christ brought messages to 7 churches in Revelation He never considered size or growth as an important matter. We have some major problems here. First we have to make the logical jump that lack of numerical growth warrants a reformation. Second, if we make that logical jump, then we have to decide which of the four reformations is right to join. Third, having joined one of them, we have to overturn everything we have been doing, even at the expense of alienating solid Christians who love their church and the gospel, in order to make our message and practice acceptable to the world (and thus facilitate growth).

Not a single epistle in the New Testament rebukes a church for not growing! Furthermore, when it comes to the church's relationship to the lost, there are warnings to not give

needless offense, but there are no instructions to change the nature of Christian teaching and gatherings so that a "target audience" would find it appealing in their unregenerate state.<sup>xvi</sup> It seems to me that too many pastors are signing up for some version of this new reformation without critically examining the claims of its proponents by comparing them with Scripture.

The new reformation isn't designed to make anything more Biblical; it is designed to do two things: 1) create a "felt need" in pastors by suggesting that they are failing God based on demographic studies and statistics, and 2) feed the appetite for success in the eyes of their peers (who wants to "fail?") by designing a system that will work to make their churches grow. Why be one of the miserable statistics of failure when you can sign up to become Purpose Driven? If you follow the protocol the way it is designed to be followed, your church is very likely to be deemed "healthy." Southerland achieved this status by using these proven techniques to grow his church from 300 to 2100.<sup>xvii</sup> This creates a dilemma for pastors: either continue to preach the gospel clearly as preached in the New Testament in its native offensiveness to the unregenerate mind and be deemed a failure by the church growth experts, or join the new reformation and learn how to turn your "sick" church into a "healthy" one as defined by the church growth technocrats. If the numbers that Rick Warren cites are accurate, many pastors in America are choosing the second option.

**How Vision Is Used to Change Churches.** The concept "vision" is the key to converting one's church to becoming Purpose Driven. Southerland's book used the term "vision" continually, claiming that it is supported by the Book of Nehemiah. He presents an eight step program for pastors to follow that will transition their church to becoming Purpose Driven. The steps are all dependent on his concept of vision. I will show that the way he and other Church Growth advocates use the term vision is entirely different from how it is used in the Bible.

In order to understand this transitioning process, we need to understand what Warren and Southerland mean by the term "vision." The term "vision" is never found in the Book of Nehemiah, though Southerland uses Nehemiah as a key example of someone who used the principle of vision to achieve something great for God. Nehemiah was on a mission that God endorsed to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. But the vision for doing so was given many years previous by authoritative prophets from God; it was not dreamed up by Nehemiah.

The term vision in the Bible relates to special revelation, either true or false. True vision was God's authoritative word to the people (which is contained in our Scriptures),

not someone having a plan for the future that they hoped to implement. In modern business jargon, the term “vision” does not have the same meaning that it did in the Bible. Southerland makes a major category error when he confuses the business meaning of vision with the Biblical meaning.

False vision in the Bible was that which originated from man’s imagination: “*Then the Lord said to me, ‘The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.’*” (Jeremiah 14:14). Later in Jeremiah we find the same idea: “*Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the Lord”*” (Jeremiah 23:16). The use of the term “vision” in modern business lingo concerns a visionary person seeing the marketing of a product all the way from research and development to marketing and support. This “vision” begins in the mind of a capable businessperson. Executing the vision follows the plan that Southerland lays out in his book: conducting market surveys of potential religious consumers; defining the business; selling the power brokers on it; selling the business team, selling the key workers and the common people on the concept; and dealing with opposition. This is a business marketing plan pure and simple. It starts with man’s imagination, not God’s authoritative vision contained in Scripture.

To show how Southerland and others who have bought into Warren’s Purpose Driven paradigm are using the term vision, I will cite several examples. In the following sentences, Southerland tells what vision is and is not: “Vision is not just a destination, it is a journey. Vision is not just a product; it is a process. Vision is not just the finish line; it is the whole race.”<sup>xxviii</sup> These ideas have nothing to do with the Biblical concept of vision as authoritative revelation from God given to His authoritative spokespersons. Southerland goes on, “Any business guru can tell you that research and development is a major part of producing a winning product.”<sup>xxix</sup> Again, this has nothing to do with the Biblical term “vision.” This is a modern, secular use of the term. I am convinced that the Church Growth Movement uses the term because it sounds like something from the Bible and suits their purposes of “selling” a version of Christianity to the masses. To use the term in the business sense and simultaneously tell people that it came from the Bible is a blatant example of equivocation.<sup>xx</sup>

Here is an example from Southerland’s book where he confuses people by using the term “vision” in an unbiblical way: “Paul captured the essence of vision when he wrote these words: *‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind*

*has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.’* 1 Corinthians 2:9.” This passage is not the essence of what the Bible means by vision, it is the opposite. There is no vision in the sense of authoritative revelation from God for what is not revealed and no one knows! What Paul is describing will not be known until the end of the age when Christ returns. We only know that part of it that is revealed in Scripture. Southerland, however, makes this application: “For our eyes to see God’s vision, for our ears to hear God’s voice, and for our minds to conceive of God’s plan, we must spend time in major preparation.”<sup>xxxi</sup> Exactly what “preparation” is going to give us what God has not chosen to reveal to anyone? The following shows that Southerland is using “vision” in the modern business marketing sense and not the Biblical sense: “Before we can receive God’s vision for His church, we must prepare for vision. God’s vision for your church is big stuff so the preparation for that vision must be big stuff as well.”<sup>xxxi</sup> He obviously is not speaking of what has been revealed once for all by God’s authoritative prophets. Instead, he is speaking of what we get in our mind now from extra-biblical sources in order to conceive of a different future for our local church.

To make this equivocation process even more confusing, Southerland tells his readers that Nehemiah used this type of vision process in his ministry: “Nehemiah understood this vital principle: vision is best birthed out of thorough knowledge.”<sup>xxxi</sup> No, Nehemiah was not from the Peter Drucker school of the prophets. The term “vision” does not even appear in the Book of Nehemiah. The “vision” of rebuilding Jerusalem was given to the authoritative prophet Jeremiah years before: “*‘Behold, days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when the city shall be rebuilt for the Lord from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate’*” (Jeremiah 31:38). It was also spoken to Daniel: “*So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress’*” (Daniel 9:25). Nehemiah was carrying out the plan of God that had been declared God’s plan by God’s Biblical prophets. He was not using his imagination to dream big things for God; nor was he “birthing” a vision by some man-made process.

Southerland tells pastors how to “birth” their vision, supposedly based on Nehemiah: “First, go to school on *the unchurched people in your community.*”<sup>xxxi</sup> Nehemiah knew from Jeremiah and Daniel that God intended to restore Jerusalem. In our day, we do not have authoritative scripture telling us that our churches should exist to meet the needs and expectations of the unregenerate. Nehemiah surveying the situation in Jerusalem to see what would be needed to rebuild is not analogous to pastors doing marketing surveys of potential religious consumers so as to design a church that suits their fancy. This is a huge category disconnect.

Yet Pastor Southerland is so absolutely convinced that the Purpose Driven paradigm is God's vision for the church, that he is willing to take criticism for not preaching the gospel in order to fulfill this vision. When criticized for not preaching the gospel, He gathered his leaders, stood his ground, and said this: "This is where I have to go. I must do church for the unchurched; I can't go back to doing church for the already convinced. If you want to go with me, please do."<sup>xxv</sup> His vision of creating a Purpose Driven church is more important than anything else and he willingly suffered the loss of 300 former members to create a church that appeals to the "unchurched" (which is code for the "unregenerate"). Why feed Jesus' little flock when you could have a huge group of happy religious consumers instead? He made a poor choice.

Biblical vision is from God, it is spoken authoritatively once for all Christians for all ages and it always applies in all situations. Vision that helps a pastor transition his church from a gospel preaching church to a Purpose Driven church comes from the imagination of men, is fueled by the wisdom of marketing gurus, and changes as often as the target group takes on different cultural characteristics. The modern business term has nothing to do with the Biblical one. Do not be fooled. The possibility thinker Robert Schuler and the "exponential" thinker Rick Warren have visions alright, but they did not come from the authoritative prophets of the Bible.

**Why Christians are only Important if They Join the Vision Team.** The goal of the transition from a Bible church to a Purpose Driven church is to get everyone to buy the vision and agree to work to implement it. If this is happening in your church your pastor has probably already bought into the Purpose Driven franchise and is convinced that he is on a serious mission from God. He thinks that everyone who resists being Purpose Driven either has bad motives, is a slave of religious traditions, or is a tool of Satan. Such people will only hinder the implementation of the vision. In a chapter on dealing with opposition, Southerland admits that he was accused of not preaching the gospel.<sup>xxvi</sup> So his "evil" opponents want the gospel preached, much like the many people who have emailed me after their churches were hijacked by Rick Warren's movement.

If you believe that the church should preach the law and gospel and feed the flock solid food through expository Bible preaching, you likely have enemy status in the eyes of the pastor and leaders of your church—especially if the decision to transition has already been made. Your church, once the transition is implemented, will no longer exist to feed God's flock and preach the gospel to the lost, but will exist to meet the "felt needs" of religious consumers (the target market niche).

Southerland makes it clear that the vision is about reaching a target group. He says, "The question in business jargon would be 'Who is our primary customer?'"<sup>xxvii</sup> Determining this requires market research that will reveal who the church is targeting. Southerland writes, "We must determine who is in the center of the bull's-eye on the target."<sup>xxviii</sup> For Rick Warren, the target was "Saddleback Sam," a composite, typical person that Warren designed his church services to please.<sup>xxix</sup> We must be clear about something. The market research that determines the target audience that these pastors want to reach is used to design a church service, not gospel preaching outside the church. The church is no longer to be a gathering of Christians around the means of grace; it is to be a place to attract the target audience by feeding their religious appetites, whatever they may be. Marketing is ultimately about satisfied customers.

Once this vision is established and refined to reach the market niche that seems most likely to respond favorably, all "team members" must get on board with the vision. This means that the long standing church members' needs—being fed God's Word, prayer, fellowship, and opportunities to minister to one another—are no long important. The "felt needs" of the target audience are what define the vision of the Purpose Driven church. Those who long to be fed God's Word are made to look selfish and unwilling to reach the lost.

Perhaps expanding on an analogy from earlier will help clarify this. The Purpose Driven church is a church that has adopted a business marketing strategy. As we stated, the previous members are like employees of a company that was bought out by another. The new company has a different target audience with different appetites. Imagine you were an employee of a fried chicken restaurant and it was bought out by a pizza franchise. The new corporate vision will target people with an appetite for pizza. You will either have to work to follow company protocol so that the target group becomes satisfied customers, or you will have to give up your job. Pizza customers are never going to expect chicken at that location again.

If you were a member of a Bible church that consisted of people with a hunger for the whole counsel of God, the gospel preached without compromise, and worship designed to bring glory to God, and that church becomes Purpose Driven, you now have a different purpose. The church will no longer exist to satisfy the appetites of those who love God's Word and hunger for the truth. It now exists to feed the appetites of religious consumers of the target market group. These have no appetite for what the church used to provide, AND THEY NEVER WILL! People do not go to a pizza place if their appetite is for chicken and they do not go to a Purpose Driven church if their appetite is for solid, unsullied Bible teaching. Whatever the church offers that

satisfies their targeted religious consumers will have to continue to be offered. If this targeted market group had an appetite for the gospel and expository Bible preaching, the church would never have changed, they could have reached this group the way they were. Having changed, the church will now be a different entity, permanently.

If you were a member before the change, your only choices are to join the new vision and work to meet the felt needs of the targeted market group (religious consumers)—or leave. If you stay, you will have to spend your time helping the pastor achieve his vision (marketing plan). You will have to do this knowing that never again will God's Word be preached with authority and power from the pulpit (which religious consumers have no appetite for), because to do so would be to give up the vision which your pastor is trained to never do at any cost. If you loved chicken and chose to work in a chicken place because of that, once the pizza company buys your store, your chicken days are over. So it is when a Bible church becomes Purpose Driven. This is true because of one simple fact: "Saddleback Sam" has no hunger for the things of God. The old way was preaching the gospel to the lost. If they were converted they got a hunger for the things of God and then they joined a Bible church where they were fed. The new way is to make the church appealing to those who are not converted. This means it can never become a Bible church. As soon as it did, it would quit attracting the target market group.

Can you imagine what would happen if John MacArthur preached the gospel, week after week in the Crystal Cathedral? I can. Some people would be converted and their lives permanently changed by the power of God. The majority would be outraged, offended and leave the church. They come to get a self-esteem boost, not be told they are wretched sinners facing God's wrath. Of course this will never happen as long as Robert Schuller has anything to say about it. It cannot happen because the Crystal Cathedral exists for other reasons than preaching the blood atonement. So does any Purpose Driven church. The differences between Schuller and Warren are merely superficial. Warren includes evangelical terminology and has a more orthodox statement of faith. But what is preached to the general public is very similar. That is the target audience. Warren says that "Saddleback Sam" is "skeptical of 'organized religion.'"<sup>xxx</sup> So are those who are attracted to the Crystal Cathedral.

Once this key change is in place, and the church leadership has bought the vision package, the members either become team players helping to make the new marketing plan work, or they are disloyal traitors who have to go. If you long for solid Bible teaching you are in the wrong place if yours is a Purpose Driven church. That you will leave is a cost your pastor has already calculated and decided he is willing to pay. Reading the *Transitioning* book that Rick Warren

promotes makes that crystal clear. Southerland tells pastors, "You will be criticized. It might as well be for doing the right thing."<sup>xxxi</sup> From what he writes, one must conclude that he really believes that making the church a community gathering place for religious consumers rather than a gathering of the "called out ones" is the right thing. He really believes he is like Nehemiah sent by God to rebuild Jerusalem. He really believes that people who hunger for gospel preaching and Bible teaching are the enemies of God's vision. If your church has bought the Purpose Driven franchise, your pastor probably does too. It is a sad, harsh reality, but you have lost your church. It's very unlikely that it will ever again be a gospel-centric church. (*Chapter 3 of the book – used with permission*)

<sup>i</sup> Dan Southerland, *Transitioning; Leading Your Church Through Change* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2000).

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid. 115.

<sup>iii</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2002) 167.

<sup>iv</sup> Southerland never admits that the church used to be a Bible church, previous churches are called "program driven" by Rick Warren in the foreword, *Transitioning*, 9.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid. 13.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid. 14.

<sup>viii</sup> Ibid. 14, 15.

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>x</sup> Robert Schuller, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, (Waco, Word Books, 1982).

<sup>xi</sup> Warren lately is distancing himself from Schuller and likely would object to being linked to Schuller's reformation. However, the rational that Schuller offers is very much the same as Warren's. Says Schuller, "However, I have seen my calling as one that communicates spiritual reality to the unchurched who may not be ready to believe in God. . . . As a missionary, I find hope of respectful contact is based on a 'human-need' approach rather than a theological attack." Schuller, *Self-Esteem*, 12. Schuller, like Warren, uses the apparent lack of growth of the church as justification for a new reformation: "For decades now we have watched the church in Western Europe and in America decline in power, membership, and influence. I believe that this decline is the result of our placing theocentric communications [gospel preaching and Bible teaching] above the meeting of the deeper emotional and spiritual needs of humanity." Ibid. Unless Rick Warren somehow shows how his "reformation" is different than Schuller's, I must assume that Warren is of the same ilk as Schuller.

<sup>xii</sup> <http://www.globalharvestministries.org/index.asp?action=apostolic>

<sup>xiii</sup> Martha Sawyer Allen, *The Divine Redefined – From female theologians come the stirrings of a new Reformation*; in Minneapolis Star Tribune, November 3, 1993.

<sup>xiv</sup> The article says, "They are exploring the sensual and sexual side of the divine, rooting around in contemplative and introspective interplay with God, and talking about women's daily experiences of the divine in every culture as central to theology today." Ibid.

<sup>xv</sup> Ironically, if these "reformations" actually succeed, there will be so much wrong with the church that we will need a reformation to get back to the principles of the first Reformation.

<sup>xvi</sup> This passage is cited as proof that the service should be designed for unbelievers: "If therefore the whole church should assemble together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?" (1 Corinthians 14:23) This passage, however, falls into the category of not giving needless offense, not designing a service to appeal to the sensibilities of the unregenerate. It describes the undesirable results of a hypothetical situation, not a meeting designed to appeal to the typical unsaved Corinthian.

<sup>xvii</sup> Southerland, *Transitioning*, 12.

<sup>xviii</sup> Ibid. 20.

<sup>xix</sup> Ibid. 21.

<sup>xx</sup> The Definition of equivocation is, "The same word used with two different meanings." <http://www.datanation.com/fallacies/equiv.htm>. This example is given: Criminal actions are illegal, and all murder trials are criminal actions, thus all murder trials are illegal. (Here the term "criminal actions" is used with two different meanings). Here is another use of the term equivocation: "falsification by means of vague or ambiguous language."

<http://www.hyperdictionary.com/search.aspx?define=equivocation>

<sup>xxi</sup> Southerland, *Transitioning*, 21.

<sup>xxii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Ibid. 26.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Ibid. italics in original.

<sup>xxv</sup> Ibid. 117.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Ibid. 117.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Ibid. 49.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Ibid. 51.

<sup>xxix</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995) 170.

<sup>xxx</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Southerland, *Transitioning*, 118.

secularly called Christianity from the real and biblical Christianity of the first century church and leadership of Jesus Christ.

Every pastor, reverend bishop and preachers who come here in our prison have 'trouble – 40 days purpose driven mentality', and always talk about it, plus this confusing positive confession. These 'gospels' is all over the church and the majority of Christians believe them without looking it against the Bible, because it works, they says – ignorant of knowing that Satan can do miracles, signs and lying wonders through his servants (Matt. 7:21-22) who claimed to follow Jesus Christ but being exposed by their fruit 'gospels' that contradict the Word of God – the Bible.

We really thank God for such people like you who have counted the cost and follow Jesus in season and out of season. We were so deeply into Copeland and Hagan ministries before we met your alert ministries and we used to wonder because though we used to believe them, we never came to satisfaction in their 'theology' and since the Lord was aware of our predicament, He made sure that we met your ministries of Discernment Newsletter and "the Berean Call" . . . there has been a biblical transformation in our life and I can personally tell you my sister that I am not in the place I used to be, I am becoming what God intended me to be and through Christ, not to confess things into existence as if I am God – I trust Him in every circumstance. And He sustains me. I depend in Him, not in what I say – speak out either in my 'faith' but in Him – only. I Him love so much that, what you have brought through Discernment newsletter to be what is in accordance with His Word – after I have checked it against the Bible, I took it and put it in practice by the Holy Spirif of God.

However, there is much to be done in our growing group since one of our inmate brothers have Christian relatives, parents and brothers who are deep in the 'Purpose Driven Church' and Purpose Driven life outside and they keep sending these books to our prison, being sincerely wrong, by helping their brethren. Many brothers have come to us, asking why we do not speak about these books of Rick Warren, and we have told them that like positive confession, we are studing these books to check whether must we recommend or not. Brothers are interested to hear from us our side and we do not have he resources. We think it will help us too.....AM

**Note: It is a joy to be able to send materials to those like this brother who are taking a stand and being faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ – even behind bars. We never cease to marvel at the grace and mercy of our Lord towards those who are truly hungry and seeking for Him.**

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## **Redefining Christianity**

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By Bob DeWaay

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#### **Letter from a prisoner in South Africa:**

. . . As you see the above address, I am one of concerned born-again Christian believers who have been visited by Christ Jesus through hearing the Gospel of Salvation right here in prison since 1998. I and other faithful brothers have been connected with your ministries of Discernment from 2001 while Hester was in charge of your branch at Krugersdorp, South Africa, before sister Helen Gevers took over. We are a group of dedicated believers in Christ Jesus as now Lord and Saviour and desire only to hear and receive whatever He says. Your ministry of discernment has contributed much, not less in our Christian spiritual life as an eye opener, in a profound way. God has used you to teach us the doctrines of true Christianity and differentiate what is