

JOHN PIPER invite to RICK WARREN

In my December 2006 'News From The Front' newsletter that can be viewed on <http://www.takeheed.info/news-from-the-front-december-2006/> I included an article called 'Defending my Father's wrath' that had been written by **John Piper**. I included it in the context of warning about people like Steve Chalke and others who had publicly denied and denounced the very heart of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ – namely His '**penal substitution**' – that on the cross He, as a substitute for His chosen people, endured the penalty of His Father's wrath against sin.

At the conclusion of the article by Mr Piper I included the following 'caveat' –

By including this article by John Piper, it should not be construed that this is a blanket endorsement by 'Take Heed' of all that he writes or does by way of ministry – I believe there are areas that currently do give rise for some concern such as his recent willingness to afford a platform to Mark Driscoll [a great 'fan' of the Roman Catholic mystic Thomas Merton]. However, following 'Take Heed's' own defence of 'penal substitution' due to the publicly expressed attack upon it and denial of it by Steve Chalke and Brian McLaren I felt this article by John Piper would be helpful in that context.

It is with growing concern that I now need to draw attention to Mr Piper's 'courting' of another controversial, so-called 'evangelical', and that is Rick Warren. Earlier this year Mr Piper announced that he had issued an invitation to Rick Warren to be a participant speaker at his 'Desiring God' conference planned for later this year. A video of Mr Piper explaining the reasoning behind his decision has been posted online and several ministries have sought, quite rightly, to challenge some of the comments made and to question also the motivation for the invite.

One such ministry challenge can be viewed on <http://newdemonstration.com/asides/rick-warren-rock-solid-theologically-really-dr-piper> and another can be viewed on <http://apprising.org/2010/04/01/rick-warren-is-whatever-he-needs-to-be/>

The full text of this portion of what John Piper said was posted to this web site link <http://www.sharperiron.org/filings/3-31-10/14433> and is as follows –

"I had mentioned some negative things earlier about the emergent church, I said the black community didn't get into it BUT the observation was the black community at least some of you, DID get into 40 days of Purpose. Uh Mainly from Purpose Driven Life and Purpose Driven Church and Rick Warren and Rick Warren isn't emergent, BUT maybe not totally separate and Mark Driscoll just preached there, and preached from the cross, and Rick was moved. And do I, what do I think about all that?

Well I put my cards totally on the table here, um I have invited Rick Warren to come to the Desiring God National Conference this fall. And he's coming. Now I will get a lot of criticism for this from my Reformed brothers, because... not because Rick Warren is openly non calvinistic or non reformed. I don't think he wears his theological distinctives on his sleeve, but would be probably theologically more at home with where I am than where an arminian is. I believe that. What makes Warren a

problem, and I'm gonna... well, when I wrote him, here's what I said. And he'll probably watch this video too. I said the conference is called "THINK: The life of the Mind and the Love of God." I want you to come. You are the most well-known pragmatist pastor in the world. I don't think you are a pragmatist at root. Come and tell us why thinking Biblically matters to you in your amazingly pragmatic approach to ministry."

"I want him to lay his cards on the table. I want him to tell us what makes him tick. Because he does come across in much of what he says and does as very results-oriented and pragmatic and not theologically driven, and yet, I met him for the first-time last year at Ralph Winter's funeral in Pasadena. And we sat beside each other on the platform for three hours. I like him because he sings. He sings badly. And anybody who's willing to sing when they sing badly, I like em. And we were talking beforehand and he said to me 'I'm reading all the works of Jonathan Edwards this year. I pick a great theologian every year and I read all of his collected works. I'm on volume 17 of the Yale series of Jonathan Edwards' works.'"

"'You've gotta be kidding me. Nothing you've ever said would incline me to think ...' (laughter)

"So these guys are gonna go interview him tomorrow I think so you can quote some of these things.

I do think he's deeply theological. He's a brilliant man. He wouldn't have the church he does or the Peace Plan, or all the influence he does and of course the greatest sentence in the Purpose Driven life is the first one, isn't it? It's not about you, it's about God. The Glory of God. So I don't think he's emergent. At root I think he is theological and doctrinal and sound. And what makes him tick? Actively and doing church? I intend to find out. So. I like him and I'm frustrated by some of his stuff."

On the 'Crosstalk' blog Ingrid Schlueter picked up on a very crucial portion of what John Piper said regarding his invite to Rick Warren – here is what Ingrid wrote –

John Piper – Quote of the Day

Posted by [Ingrid Schlueter](#) in **Purpose Driven, Religion** on March 31st, 2010 | **11 responses**

“.. I do think he’s deeply theological. He’s a brilliant man. He wouldn’t have the church he does or the Peace Plan, or all the influence he does and of course the greatest sentence in the Purpose Driven Life is the first one, isn’t it? It’s not about you, it’s about God. The Glory of God. So, I don’t think he’s emergent. At root I think he is theological and doctrinal and sound.”

John Piper, [speaking here 35 minutes in on Rick Warren and his invitation to Warren to attend his Desiring God Conference 2010](#)

Note: Please see [Pastor Bob DeWaay's Berean Tool](#) for the Purpose Driven Life to learn how Rick Warren's opening sentence referred to by Piper is denied by everything in the rest of the Purpose Driven Life. John Piper has neglected to check the teachings of the book with the Scriptures which is just wrong.

From the responses posted to what Ingrid quoted here, I noted and extracted the following incisive, discerning comments (particularly the one in red) –

'I personally was for years, a follower of Warren, and was deceived in ways you cannot imagine, and to hear (John Piper say) that he is theological at root?'

'I've been talking with my family about this, as we all come on crosstalk once daily or weekly. We are, all of us as a family, praying for Pastor Piper in hopes that he will recant his decision to have Warren speak at his conference.'

'I'm truly saddened by John Piper... It's time to view John Piper as a sly wolf and distance ourselves from him until he repents. He can say whatever he wants about the motive behind inviting Warren, but the truth will be revealed in time as we watch John Piper's ministry unfold. I really hate to see another preacher endorse the false teacher Rick Warren.'

'There is no reason to offer RW yet another forum to 'show us his cards.'

"He's a brilliant man. He wouldn't have the church he does or the Peace Plan, or all the influence he does..." This reminds me of something a friend told me years ago. He said that the number of people that believe something is true is not a testament to its validity. To illustrate this, he said "millions of Mormons can't be wrong, can they?" It was rhetorical, whereupon he answered his own question: "yes, they can, and they are." I'm not impressed by *"the church he has,"* or the *"PEACE plan,"* or *"influence."* I am interested in biblical truth and doctrinal purity'.

'Since the invitation to Driscoll, I have tried to overlook Piper's downgrade. How much he has meant to me in his writings and preaching! If Warren is theological in his thinking, he is even a greater hypocrite than I would have thought possible. To know truth and then to ignore Biblical truth is inexcusable. What a sad day for historical Christianity!'

'Every time Piper speaks I get a little nervous. He talks in a way that is a little squirrely, I'm not sure where he's going with a particular thought, you just hope he stays on track. I would find it hard sit weekly under his leadership. It doesn't surprise me he would hook up with Warren.'

'I don't know what to say to this. Piper is saying he's sound because of the church he has, peace plan, etc?! What has happened to John Piper? This is craziness and he knows it. The size of his church doesn't prove he's doctrinally sound, and the peace plan... I won't even dignify that by addressing it. I'm just stunned.'

During my recent ministry trip to the Isle of Man I was asked specifically to speak at the midweek meeting there on the topic of **'Rick Warren and things Purpose Driven'** and this talk can be heard by going to this link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0dxcEDSnYw>

By way of conclusion I would simply state that what John Piper has said about Rick Warren being **'theological and doctrinal and sound'** would be in direct conflict with the views clearly expressed by myself in my talk, and so my concern about the ministry of John Piper continues to grow.

Cecil Andrews – ‘Take Heed’ Ministries – 3rd April 2010