

RICK WARREN – ‘not fit for purpose’

Back in May 2006, when John Reid was the British Home Secretary, he made the now very famous statement that, as the whereabouts of hundreds of foreign prisoners liable for deportation was not actually known by his department, that the department was ‘**not fit for purpose**’ (you can read more on <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2006/may/24/prisonsandprobation.ukcrime>)

Basically, Mr Reid was saying that his department were not up to doing the very job they had been employed to do. Since making that statement the phrase ‘**not fit for purpose**’ has been used by a whole host of people to describe other diverse situations where they feel people are ‘falling down on the job’.

Rick Warren, misguidedly viewed by many as a leading evangelical preacher and defender of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has in the past 15 years built that reputation upon his authorship of, in particular, 2 books called ‘**The Purpose Driven Church**’ [1995] and ‘**The Purpose Driven Life**’ [2002]. It will not be my purpose in this article to analyse the contents of those books as many other gifted apologists have written reports highlighting some of the many shortcomings contained in Mr Warren’s books (see reports for example on <http://www.biblebb.com/files/PDLreview-SB.htm> and <http://www.biblebb.com/files/PDCreview-SB.htm>)

What I want to focus upon is a recent supposed ‘**Apologetics**’ conference [11-12 December 2010] hosted by Mr Warren at his Saddleback Church. A very helpful report highlighting some of those who spoke at this conference will be included in this article but perhaps I can make a few comments of my own before going to that report.

At the outset, it is important to understand precisely what the term ‘**Apologetics**’ means – drawing upon helpful comments in the ‘Dictionary of Theological Terms’ by Alan Cairns the word can be explained as follows – ‘**a defence of Christianity against the various arguments that have been employed to attack it – The Christian apologist is called upon to witness to the truth and so must witness clearly against man’s sinful suppression of God’s truth**’.

Today we are witnessing concentrated attacks upon God’s (biblical) truth in a number of important areas such as (1) The biblical view on homosexual behaviour (2) The biblically identified non-Christian nature of Roman Catholicism (3) The questioning and in some cases rejection of the biblically revealed ‘penal substitutionary’ nature of Christ’s sacrificial death on the Cross and (4) The willingness of some ‘emerging church’ leaders to embrace unscriptural methods of claimed revelation as in for instance mysticism or mantra-meditation.

Any faithful ‘**Apologetics**’ conference should only include speakers who reject and are not a party to these present-day ‘concentrated attacks’. Bearing this important principle in mind how then did the guest list of speakers at Mr Warren’s conference shape up? Well at this point I want now to copy the report compiled by **Lighthouse Trails Research**’ on <http://www.lighthouse Trailsresearch.com/blog/?p=5393>

Dear Lighthouse Trails Reader: This is our last Special Report for 2010. It may be the most important article we have written all year. It is long and detailed, but we hope you will take the time to read it. Please consider distributing it to those in your own mailing lists who may be interested in the welfare of the church today.

Rick Warren’s “Apologetics” Weekend Should Apologize for Representing “Another Gospel”

*Eight years after the release of **The Purpose Driven Life** and numerous efforts by discerning Christian believers to warn others of this movement, the Saddleback Apologetics Weekend unveils more clearly than ever the spiritual direction toward which the evangelical church is racing . . .*

In September 2009, Rick Warren held his first Apologetics Weekend conference at Saddleback Church. The conference featured some known apologists such as Norman Geisler and Gary Koukl.

Cecil’s comment - In the talks I gave in London on 6 November 2010 I spoke extensively about the ecumenical deception of Norman Geisler and those talks can be listened to on these links.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGUBPXfZ7-U>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcO40R6bFL4>

(It also included contemplative teacher [J.P. Moreland](#).) The conference was a surprise to some who have followed with discernment the teachings and promotions of Rick Warren over the last decade – it seemed out of place for someone who had promoted the emerging church, contemplative prayer, and kingdom-on-earth-now beliefs to be presenting an “apologetics” conference. No doubt, some assumed that Rick Warren was changing his ways. Just a month prior, at the annual [Harvest Crusade](#) by Greg Laurie, Chuck Smith (founder of [Calvary Chapel](#)) stood in front of thousands and introduced Rick Warren who was sitting on the platform as his “good friend,” inviting him to lead the audience in prayer ([see video](#)). Just three years earlier, Chuck Smith [denounced the Purpose Driven teachings](#) as incompatible with Calvary Chapel teachings and dropped Warren’s book from the Calvary Chapel book distribution.

Between the Harvest Crusade and the Apologetics Weekend at Saddleback, both in 2009, it’s no wonder some people were thinking Rick Warren and the Purpose Driven movement were now coming into alignment with traditional evangelical thought. But no evidence showed that Warren’s focus or direction had actually changed. And one year after the 2009 Saddleback Apologetics Weekend, the [2nd Annual Apologetics Weekend](#) took place and has provided the proof (once again) that Rick Warren’s Purpose Driven movement is indeed going down a path that is [contemplative](#), emerging, and even on an ecumenical road to “Rome.” The title of the 2010 “Apologetics” conference was “Who is Jesus?” **We believe that the “Jesus” represented at this conference is another Jesus with another gospel, as we will show in this article (2 Corinthians 11:4, Galatians 1:8).**

Seeing this year’s Apologetics Weekend speaker lineup was even a surprise for Lighthouse Trails. Not because we thought Warren’s choice of speakers was contrary to what he believes but because it seemed so blatant and obvious.

This report will focus on three of the speakers at Saddleback's 2010 Apologetics Weekend conference: **Philip Yancey, Peter Kreeft, and Scot McKnight**. By the time readers finish reading this article, we think you may agree that Rick Warren's Apologetics conference should really be titled: "Rick Warren's Emerging Contemplative Road to Rome Apologetics Weekend."

Christianity Today editor-at-large, [Philip Yancey](#), has been the subject of a number of Lighthouse Trails articles for his strong propensity toward contemplative prayer as well as his public statements regarding the homosexual lifestyle. **Last week we posted an article about Yancey's upcoming speaking engagement with the "Gay Christian Network."** Roger Oakland addresses some of Yancey's views in [Faith Undone](#) (p. 215):

In 2004, Philip Yancey accepted an interview with [Candace Chellew-Hodge](#) for *Whosoever*, "an online magazine for Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, and Transgendered Christians." When Chellew-Hodge asked Yancey about his views on gays and lesbians in the church, Yancey answered:

'When it gets to particular matters of policy, like ordaining gay and lesbian ministers, I'm confused, like a lot of people. There are a few—not many, but a few—passages of Scripture that give me pause. Frankly, I don't know the answer to those questions'.

My question to Yancey and other proclaiming Christian leaders is why don't you know the answer? The Bible is clear on this matter . . . part of being a Christian is accepting God's Word and trusting that it is truly just that. Yancey may not be an emergent leader, but his beliefs certainly fit with emerging spirituality.

Cecil's comment – Back in 2004 I wrote an article identifying Mr Yancey's unscriptural views on this question of homosexuality and Christianity and that article can be viewed on –

<http://www.takeheed.info/philip-yancey-turning-the-grace-of-god-into-lasciviousness/>

The following statement he [Yancey] makes shows he shares a similar disregard for biblical doctrine:

'Perhaps our day calls for a new kind of ecumenical movement: not of doctrine, nor even of religious unity, but one that builds on what Jews, Christians, and Muslims hold in common. . . . Indeed, Jews, Christians, and Muslims have much in common'. ([source](#))

Yancey is not just causing confusion over the sinfulness of practicing homosexuality, but he is a strong advocate for contemplative mystical spirituality as well. In his 2006 book (with a 2010 edition with the same basic components), *Prayer: Does it Make Any Difference*, there is a who's who of mystical prayer and panentheist references some of which are Thomas Merton, goddess worshipper [Sue Monk Kidd](#), Henri Nouwen, [Evelyn Underhill](#), [Kenneth Leach](#), Meister Eckhart, [Teresa of Avila](#), *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Francis de Sales, Richard Rohr (referring to him as a "theologian – p. 205), and [Anne Lamott](#)—not to mention emerging innovators such as [Phyllis Tickle](#), [Jurgen Moltmann](#), and [Walter Brueggemann](#).

Yancey frequently references Thomas Merton in the book and recommends his readers turn to Merton (p. 337) and David Steindl-Rast (p. 338) for spiritual guidance. Yancey must have read these authors for he not only recommends them but also quotes from their books. This is not

guilt by association but rather guilt by promotion. We could give you almost countless examples of what these authors believe, but let us just briefly look at a few quotes.

In Ray Yungen's book, [*A Time of Departing*](#), he discloses that: "David Steindl-Rast once asked Thomas Merton what role Buddhism played in his going deeper into the spiritual life. Merton replied quite frankly: "I think I couldn't understand Christian teaching the way I do if it were not in the light of Buddhism" (*The Dawn of the Mystical Age*, Tuoti, p. 127, *ATOD*, p. 140).

Even more disturbing is Steindl-Rast's view of the atonement of Christ:

'Unfortunately, over the course of the centuries, this [Christianity] has come to be presented in almost legal language, as if it were some sort of transaction, a deal with God; there was this gap between us and God, somebody had to make up for it—all that business. We can drop that. The legal metaphor seems to have helped other generations. Fine. Anything that helps is fine. But once it [the atonement] gets in the way, as it does today, we should drop it'. (*The Ground We Share*, p. 45)

And lastly, we give you this quote by another Yancey author, Richard Rohr:

'The term "cosmic Christ" reminds us that everything and everyone belongs. . . God's hope for humanity is that one day we will all recognize that the divine dwelling place is all of creation. Christ comes again whenever we see that matter and spirit co-exist'. ([source](#))

It's not just that these authors who Yancey resonates with are individually bad – it's their collective movement that is bad. This is the same movement that Yancey clearly seems attracted to. This is the very reason Lighthouse Trails exists, not to slam people but to warn them where the contemplative, emerging movement will take them – ultimately away from the message of the Cross.

If you are unfamiliar with some of these names we have mentioned in this article, type them into the Lighthouse Trails search engine – what you find will be another "gospel" that is universalistic, mystical, socialistic, and interspiritual. Quoting one of Merton's biographers, Yungen recounts a scenario which reveals Merton's view on the relationship between God and man:

During a conference on contemplative prayer, the question was put to Thomas Merton: "How can we best help people to attain union with God?" His answer was very clear: We must tell them that they are already united with God. "Contemplative prayer is nothing other than 'coming into consciousness' of what is already there." (from Brennan Manning's book, *The Signature of Jesus*, p. 211)

Ray Yungen explains: "Merton was referring here to his pure glory-of-God-in-everybody worldview. He is not just speaking of Christians. His universalism elsewhere repudiates that fact" (*ATOD*, p. 83).

For Rick Warren to feature Philip Yancey at an "apologetics" conference gives another green light to the panentheistic contemplative prayer movement and the emerging theology that goes hand in hand. According to Webster's dictionary, the word "apologetics" is "a branch of theology devoted to the defense of the divine origin and authority of Christianity" (i.e., a defense of the biblical Christian faith).

Scot McKnight, one of the other speakers at Rick Warren's conference, is also part of the emerging spirituality. Roger Oakland speaks of McKnight in *Faith Undone*. What Oakland shows here illustrates the "road to Rome" views of those in the emerging/contemplative church:

McKnight, another emerging church influencer, was professor of religious studies at North Park University and on the Coordinating Group for Emergent Village. Of the emerging church, [he stated](#):

"As a theologian, I have studied the movement and interacted with its key leaders for years—even more, I happily consider myself part of this movement or "conversation."• As an evangelical, I've had my concerns, but overall I think what emerging Christians bring to the table is vital for the overall health of the church." ...

In referring to an Anglican service, McKnight speaks of the Eucharistic focus. [He stated](#):

"[T]he point of an Anglican gathering on a Sunday morning is not to hear a sermon but to worship the Lord through the celebration of the Eucharist.... First some scripture readings and then the sermon and then some announcements and then the Eucharist liturgy with everyone coming forward to kneel and participate—publicly—in the body and blood."

McKnight said that "the Eucharist profoundly enables the grace of God to be received with all its glories and blessings" (*Turning to Jesus*, p. 7). No doubt, McKnight has had an impact on those in the emerging church movement, and his views on the Eucharist will rub off. (*Faith Undone*, pp. 136-137)

In McKnight's books *Embracing Grace: A Gospel for All of Us* (with an endorsement by Brian McLaren on the front cover and McLaren references within) and in his book *A Community Called Atonement*, McKnight doesn't necessarily reject penal substitutionary atonement (as does McLaren) but says there are many ways of viewing atonement, likening it to golf clubs—using different ones for different purposes (Prologue). Worth noting, McKnight's *Atonement* book was published by the emerging [publishing partnership](#) of Abingdon Press and Emergent Village. McKnight is seen by the emerging church as someone who represents it. And [McKnight's website](#) and his books confirm this with numerous favorable references on these issues.

In his book *Jesus Creed*, he recommends a variety of books by contemplative advocates including Gary Thomas' book, *Sacred Pathways*, where he instructs readers to repeat a word for twenty minutes (which is mantric like meditation) and several other authors of whom we have already mentioned in this article. One of the books McKnight recommends is *Eternal Wisdom from the Desert: Writings from the Desert Fathers*. St. Anthony is one of the desert fathers featured in that book. Contemplative teacher, Willigis Jager disclosed the following:

'Christian literature makes reference to many episodes that parallel the experiences of those going a yogic way. Saint Anthony, one of the first desert mystics, frequently encountered strange and sometimes terrifying psychophysical forces while at prayer'. (Jager, *Contemplation: A Christian Path*, p. 72)

What is being described here is the Kundalini experience that can happen during mantric-like episodes. While McKnight does not come right out in his books and recommend practicing

this, he recommends those who do. What we consider McKnight to be is a [“bridger,”](#) someone who claims orthodoxy but is actually being used as a bridge between orthodoxy and a dangerous mystical practice.

Lastly, this article will focus on Peter Kreeft, one of the other “apologetic” teachers at Saddleback this past fall. Kreeft was a Dutch Reformed Protestant who converted to Catholicism. He is considered by many to be a leading apologist of the Catholic faith. Kreeft embraces wholeheartedly the doctrinal elements that have traditionally split Catholics and Protestants such as the validity of the devotion to Mary and the validity of the Catholic sacraments. In his book, *Ecumenical Jihad*, he states the following:

‘Now I see that God prefers to work through intermediaries—Mary and the saints . . . He wants us to pray through Mary and not only directly’. (p. 154)

‘[Mary] may bring the churches together again and heal the tears in her Son’s visible body on earth, she, the very one who seems to divide Catholics from Protestants. The most distinctive Catholic doctrines, especially those concerning the Eucharist and Mary, may prove to be the most unifying and attracting ones’. (p. 158)

‘Consecrate your life to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. She is the one who will win this war. She is the one (as the Bible says) who triumphs over Satan’. (p. 169 – parenthesis in original)

Cecil’s comments – A short concise and helpful review of ‘Ecumenical Jihad’ by Gary Gilley can be viewed on <http://www.svchapel.org/resources/book-reviews/12-doctrine-and-theology/279-ecumenical-jihad-by-peter-kreeft>

In my June 1999 newsletter on <http://www.takeheed.info/news-from-the-front-june-1999/> when commenting upon the ecumenical credentials of Charles Colson I cited the following as one example – ‘Wrote a favourable endorsement for the book *‘Ecumenical Jihad’* by Peter Kreeft who is a practising Roman Catholic [Mr Kreeft wrote in the book *‘The power that will reunite the Church and win the world is Eucharistic adoration’* i.e. worshipping a piece of bread as God’]

In *Faith Undone*, Roger Oakland explains Kreeft’s *predictions* of the plans of the Catholic church to bring in a Eucharistic, mystical “Christ” whom the world will worship. Oakland states:

‘What if the Eucharistic Jesus that Catholics worship and adore miraculously started healing those who adored his presence? Wouldn’t this be a strong draw to those yet outside the Catholic Church? And as Boston College professor and meditation proponent Peter Kreeft *predicted* in his book *Ecumenical Jihad*, Eucharistic adoration will have a powerful ecumenical, interspiritual effect. He says “the power that will reunite the [Catholic] Church and win the world is Eucharistic adoration’. (FA, pp. 141-142)

For readers who do not understand the significance of the papacy’s efforts to win back the *lost brethren* (Protestants) to the *Mother of all churches* (Rome) through the Eucharistic “Christ” and the new evangelization plan, please read Roger Oakland’s powerful expose, [Another Jesus](#) (we have several excerpts free on our site).

In addition to Kreeft’s absolute commitment to the Catholic Church’s Eucharistic “Christ” and the role of Mary, he is a proponent of contemplative spirituality as well. Kreeft was one of the speakers in the [Be Still – DVD](#) the infomercial for contemplative prayer, with [Beth Moore](#) and

Richard Foster. As with most, if not all, long-term contemplative proponents, Kreeft's interspiritual propensities are illustrated in his writings.

In *Ecumenical Jihad*, he says that it is "very likely" that within the Hindu and Muslim faiths there is a "hidden Christ" (p. 156). Quoting the late panentheist and interspiritualist [Raymond Pannikar](#) ("the apostle of inter-faith dialogue"), Kreeft gives credence to Pannikar's cosmic christ that Pannikar believed exists in all people. Kreeft believes that if all the religions of the world can come together in unity (and in adoration of the Immaculate [without sin] Mary), then the ills of the world can be healed. Remembering something Rick Warren said about four years ago in referring to a "second reformation in the church" helps one to understand why Warren resonates with Kreeft enough to invite him as an apologist:

"The man of peace is open and influential ... and here's the other thing, the man of peace does not have to be a Christian believer, could be Muslim, could be Jewish." ([Interview with Charlie Rose](#) - 29:00 min. mark)

Yancey, McKnight, and Kreeft – apologetics for the biblical Christian faith? Based on what we have just shown here, how would *you* answer that question? Apparently, these are not important issues to Rick Warren though. Rick Warren told Larry King once that his goal in life is to bring about a new reformation. But the reformation Warren has defined over and over is ecumenical, contemplative, and emerging. Obviously, he considers Yancey, McKnight, and Kreeft fellow defenders of the faith. **But we must ask ourselves, what faith is Rick Warren defending?**

In a *SoJourney's* magazine article (see *below) Philip Yancey once stated that he was surprised at how much he had gotten away with in the evangelical church. We wonder if Rick Warren may be saying the same thing these days. **We beseech Christian leaders who have helped further the Purpose Driven movement through their public adherence to step up to the plate and say, "I Was Wrong. I was wrong to promote him. I was wrong to be silent when I did finally realize the truth."** Is it really that difficult for Christian leaders to see the direction that Rick Warren has been going all along? Leaders, pastors, teachers, are you going to continue linking arms with "America's Pastor" who is clearly drawing closer and closer to a spirituality that the likes of David Steindl-Rast would embrace? Or will you choose to hold fast to the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Will you please men or will you be the servant of Christ?

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ". Galatians 1:6-10

Notes:

* Philip Yancey: "I myself have been surprised at what I can get away with. When I sent off the manuscript of *What's So Amazing About Grace?* I said to my wife, Janet, "That's probably the last book I'm going to write for the evangelical market." It's got a whole chapter on Mel White, who's now a gay activist, and it's got a whole chapter on Bill Clinton, who's not the most favored president of evangelicals." *Sojourner Magazine* "[Sex, Lies and Living on the Evangelical Edge](#)"

Cecil's comments – for a fairly in-depth review of this book you can go to
http://www.banneroftruth.org/pages/articles/article_detail.php?13

My sincere prayer for 2011 is simply an echo of what Lighthouse Trails wrote in their report –

We beseech Christian leaders, who have helped further the Purpose Driven movement through their public adherence, to step up to the plate and say, “I was wrong. I was wrong to promote him. I was wrong to be silent when I did finally realize the truth.”

Let's pray, for the sake of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, that many with influence will come to realise that **'Rick Warren is not fit for purpose'**.

Cecil Andrews – Take Heed' Ministries – 4 January 2011