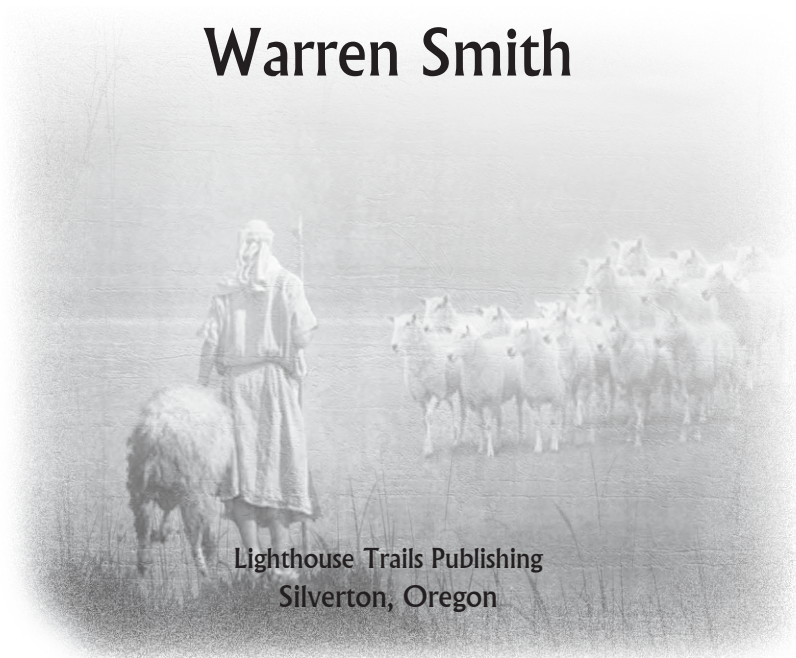


A
"Wonderful"
Deception

A *"Wonderful"* Deception

The Further New Age Implications
of the Emerging Purpose Driven Movement

Warren Smith



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A “Wonderful” Deception

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A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

—Jeremiah 5:30-31

Preface

We are admonished in Scripture to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). We are also told to “reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2). Hopefully, it is in this light that I convey my concerns regarding Rick Warren and his Purpose Driven movement.

I would not be writing this book if Rick Warren were just another neighborhood preacher. But when a pastor sells thirty million books, is the founder of a 162-nation network, has trained over “400,000 ministers and priests” throughout the world,¹ and presents his movement as the “Intel chip” for and the “Windows system” of the 21st century church,² it becomes imperative to search the Scriptures to see if what he is teaching is really so (Acts 17:11). We are not to blindly follow spiritual leaders just because they are in a position of leadership and power. We must be true to Scripture and to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

By the mid 1990s, the church was led to believe that the New Age had peaked and was no longer a serious threat. In reality, New Age teachings were spreading exponentially in almost every conceivable way. Many of us who were formerly in the New Age

could see this clearly. The New Age had become mainstream and was already in the process of reinventing itself as the “New Spirituality.”

Today, this New Age/New Spirituality is the spiritual foundation for an emerging “new worldview” that if adopted by the world—and the church—could usher in a false world peace that in actuality will be no *real* peace at all. It will be a deceptive New Age peace for a deceptive New Age. It will be everything that the true Jesus Christ warned would come in His name.

In 2002, I authored *Reinventing Jesus Christ: The New Gospel*. In that book, I explain how the New Age is much more deceptive and all-encompassing than what is being presented to the church by today’s church leaders. In a chapter titled “The Silent Church,” I describe how the church seems to be walking into a spiritual trap. I ask why Christian leaders aren’t warning believers about the New Age/New Spirituality, which is working its way into the church. Rick Warren’s best-selling book, *The Purpose Driven Life* gave me my answer: The reason Christian leaders aren’t taking the New Age more seriously is because figures, like Warren, are not *ringing out* a warning and are themselves being influenced and deceived by the New Age.

A whole new wave of church leaders is overtaking the church. But rather than declaring “all the counsel of God” and warning about spiritual deception, the focus of these leaders is almost entirely on the culture and on fulfilling “God’s Dream”—a concept that Robert Schuller has been popularizing for over thirty-five years. “God’s Dream” is an unbiblical concept that is being embraced by countless numbers of Christian and New Age leaders alike.

I have been warning about New Age teachings since the day of my conversion in 1984. It has never been my intention or desire to critique men who present themselves as Christian leaders. However, as the church has become more and more intersected with the New Age, I am compelled by the Lord to speak up and warn against the very spirituality the Lord delivered me from. In Matthew 24:3-5, Jesus warns that spiritual deception will be the

predominant sign before His return. That deception is happening right now.

In Jeremiah 9:3, Jeremiah warns about those who are “not valiant for the truth.” Sadly, Rick Warren is a man who is not wholly valiant for the truth. For whatever reasons, he does not declare “all” the counsel of God (Acts 20:27) and he does not seriously reprove and expose the New Age/New Spirituality that is so clearly in our midst (Ephesians 5:13). It is a pastor’s job to protect the flock from heresy, and Rick Warren is not doing that. On the contrary, his worldwide movement has serious New Age implications.

It is important and very necessary to do good works. We *should* help the poor, feed the hungry, and care for the sick, the widows, and the orphans. But we cannot, and we must not, water down or change the teachings of the Bible in the process.

I have done my best to describe some of the further New Age implications of the emerging Purpose Driven movement. I now present these concerns to you.

Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee
understanding in all things. (2 Timothy 2:7)

Warren Smith
April 2009

Introduction

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be;
and that which is done is that which shall be done:
and there is no new thing under the sun.

— Ecclesiastes 1:9

I was still writing this book, *A “Wonderful” Deception*, when Rick Warren’s public relations firm announced that the Purpose Driven pastor was forming an “extensive” publishing partnership with Reader’s Digest Association, Inc.¹ I had already completed several chapters that describe how New Age sympathizers Norman Vincent Peale and Robert H. Schuller inspired and helped to create the Church Growth movement—a movement that subtly and not so subtly evolved from Peale’s “Positive thinking” to Schuller’s “Possibility thinking” to Rick Warren’s “Purpose Driven” thinking.

Thus, I was not surprised when I discovered that DeWitt Wallace, the late founder and longtime Executive Director of Reader’s Digest Association Inc., was “a good friend” of Norman Vincent Peale² and that *Reader’s Digest* magazine had faithfully published Peale’s articles for nearly forty years—from the late 1940s to the late 1980s.³ Therefore it seemed almost fitting that Reader’s Digest Association was now going to publish Rick Warren’s new *Purpose Driven Connection* magazine.

When I first heard about Rick Warren’s partnership with Reader’s Digest, my mind immediately flashed back through the years to a personal memory. In 1967, after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, and in the midst of the Vietnam War,

I found myself in Army basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey. When I finished my basic training, chances were high that I would be shipped off to Vietnam. But instead of receiving orders for Vietnam, I was assigned to the White House in Washington DC. To my amazement, I would be living in my own apartment and working directly for the President of the United States.

After obtaining a top-security clearance, I began my new assignment with the White House Communications Agency. The agency was responsible for providing communications support to the President and Vice President wherever they traveled or happened to be. While many of my more technically-skilled colleagues traveled with the President and Vice-President around the country and abroad, my less technical supply job usually kept me bound to the DC area. In fact, during my entire two years with the White House Communications Agency, there was only one time that I ever made an outside trip with the President. Forty years ago, I was part of the White House advance team that prepared the way for President Richard Nixon's visit to his friend DeWitt Wallace of *Reader's Digest* magazine.⁴

The world is fond of saying that "there is a reason for everything" and that "what goes around comes around." I don't really know what to say about that presidential visit I took to the heart of *Reader's Digest* country so many years ago. But I remember the New York Hudson Valley hamlet that DeWitt Wallace and *Reader's Digest* called home like it was yesterday. What irony that the only trip I took on behalf of the President of the United States was to the founder and Executive Director of *Reader's Digest*. And how fitting that the same Readers Digest Association Inc. that formerly published the writings and teachings of Robert Schuller's mentor Norman Vincent Peale has begun publishing the writings and teachings of Rick Warren.⁵

Rick Warren describes himself as a "change agent,"⁶ but the more he appears to change things the more things seem to remain the same. *Reader's Digest* successfully promoted Norman Vincent Peale's books and articles and kept Peale's ministry in

the world’s limelight for nearly four decades. What worked for Peale then will surely work for Rick Warren now.

As I will later describe in this book, Norman Vincent Peale’s strong New Age sympathies came to my attention after *Deceived on Purpose* was published in 2004. Shortly thereafter, I would learn of Peale’s New Age influence on Robert Schuller and its subsequent impact on the Church Growth movement that includes Rick Warren today.

However, before we look at some of the further New Age implications of the emerging Purpose Driven movement, let us first review some of the original New Age implications described in *Deceived on Purpose*.

One

Deceived on Purpose

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

—Galatians 5:9

I was working as a hospice social worker on the California coast in the late summer of 2003 when I first read Rick Warren’s book *The Purpose Driven Life*. Having been formerly involved in the New Age movement, I immediately recognized some serious New Age implications to Warren’s Purpose Driven movement. Feeling compelled to warn the church about the spiritual confusion that could result from some of his teachings, I resigned my hospice job to write *Deceived on Purpose: The New Age Implications of the Purpose Driven Church*. The book was published in August of 2004.

In *Deceived on Purpose*, while I did not describe Rick Warren or his Purpose Driven Church as “New Age,” I did point out the many New Age implications regarding his teachings and the danger those teachings posed for the church.

Because Saddleback apologists have misrepresented these warnings and because my concerns have grown significantly since I wrote *Deceived on Purpose*, I have written this follow-up book. To lay a proper foundation for A “Wonderful” Deception, I will briefly summarize some of the basic concerns I expressed in *Deceived on Purpose*. I will recap these in the remainder of this first chapter.

Ten Basic Concerns

1) Rick Warren Cites New Age Leader

In *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren introduces his main themes of “hope” and “purpose.” Inexplicably, Warren chooses to introduce “hope” and “purpose” in his book by citing Dr. Bernie Siegel—a veteran New Age leader who claims to have a spirit-guide named George.¹ Somehow, readers of *The Purpose Driven Life* are expected to believe that God inspired Warren to introduce the themes of hope and purpose by referencing the “wisdom” of Bernie Siegel, an author and leader in the New Age movement. But the Bible warns that this kind of worldly wisdom is not from God and can confuse and stumble believers, and completely mislead unbelievers:

This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. (James 3:15)

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way. (Romans 14:13)

2) Rick Warren Sends Confusing New Age Message: “God is in everything”

Out of the fifteen different Bible versions Rick Warren uses in *The Purpose Driven Life*, he chooses to cite Ephesians 4:6 from a new translation that erroneously conveys the panentheistic New Age teaching that God is “in” everything. According to New Age leaders, this teaching is foundational to the New Age/New Spirituality.² Yet of these fifteen Bible versions Warren uses in his book, he chooses the *New Century Version* that has potentially misled millions of Purpose Driven readers to believe this key New Age doctrine that God is “in” everything. Regarding God, Warren writes:

The Bible says, “*He rules everything and is everywhere and is in everything*”³

The *New Century Version* quoted by Rick Warren verbalizes what *A Course in Miracles* and my other New Age books taught me years ago—that God is “in” everyone and everything. This completely misrepresents what the apostle Paul is saying in Ephesians 4:6. In *Deceived on Purpose*, I explain:

In this Scripture Paul is not writing to the world at large. The book of Ephesians is Paul’s letter to the Church of Ephesus and to the faithful followers of Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 1:1 he makes it clear that he is writing to “the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.”

According to properly translated Scripture, God is not “in” everyone and everything, and God’s Holy Spirit *only* indwells those who truly accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior (John 14:15-17; Acts 5:32). In *Deceived on Purpose*, I wrote:

Because the Church of Ephesus was composed of believers who had accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, God had sent His Holy Spirit to them. Therefore, as a result of their conversion God’s Holy Spirit resided in them all. Thus, Paul is *only* addressing the *believers* of Ephesus and the “faithful in Christ Jesus” when he stated that God is “above all, and through all, and in *you* all” (emphasis added). He was not saying that God is present in unbelievers. He was not saying that God is “in” everyone and “in” everything. That is what the New Age teaches.⁴

It is vital to understand the difference in renderings of Ephesians 4:6. Compare the *New Century Version* that Rick Warren quotes with the *King James Bible*:

He rules everything and is everywhere and is in everything. (NCV)

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (KJV)

3) Rick Warren and *The Message*

In *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren cites Eugene Peterson’s *The Message* more than any other Bible version. *The Message* is laden with its own set of questionable New Age implications. In the first chapter of *The Purpose Driven Life*, five of the six Scriptures Warren cites come from *The Message*. Warren states that *The Message* is a Bible “paraphrase,” yet he frequently writes, “the Bible says” when quoting from *The Message*.⁵

One of the many examples of the New Age implications of *The Message* is seen in Eugene Peterson’s paraphrasing of the Lord’s Prayer. Where most translations read “in earth, as it is in heaven,” Peterson inserts the occult/New Age phrase “as above, so below.” The significance of this mystical occult saying is seen clearly in *As Above, So Below*, a book published in 1992 by the editors of *New Age Journal*. Chief editor Ronald S. Miller describes how the occult/magical saying “as above, so below” conveys the “fundamental truth about the universe”—the teaching that “we are all one” because God is “immanent” or “within” everyone and everything. Miller writes:

Thousands of years ago in ancient Egypt, the great master alchemist Hermes Trismegistus, believed to be a contemporary of the Hebrew prophet Abraham, proclaimed this fundamental truth about the universe: “As above, so below; as below, so above.” This maxim implies that the transcendent God beyond the physical universe and the immanent God within ourselves are one. Heaven and Earth, spirit

and matter, the invisible and the visible worlds form a unity to which we are intimately linked.⁶

Miller continues describing the meaning of “as above, so below” by quoting Sufi scholar Reshad Field:

“‘As above, so below’ means that the two worlds are instantaneously seen to be one when we realize our essential unity with God. . . . The One and the many, time and eternity, are all One.”⁷ (ellipsis in original)

In 2004 when I searched “as above, so below” on the Internet, the first entry listed further defined this “key” New Age term:

This phrase comes from the beginning of The Emerald Tablet and embraces the entire system of traditional and modern magic which was inscribed upon the tablet in cryptic wording by Hermes Trismegistus. The significance of this phrase is that it is believed to hold the key to all mysteries. All systems of magic are claimed to function by this formula. “‘That which is above is the same as that which is below’ . . . The universe is the same as God, God is the same as man.”⁸

Most of the references, either on websites or in books and magazines containing the phrase “as above, so below” describe the term as having the same occult/mystical/New Age/esoteric/magical sources. One website states:

This ancient phrase, “As above, so below” describes the Oneness of All That Is.⁹

In *Deceived on Purpose*, I discuss my concerns over Rick Warren placing such great emphasis on Eugene Peterson’s *The Message*. When I looked up Ephesians 4:6 in *The Message*, Peterson’s paraphrase (like

the *New Century Version*) also definitely lends itself to the New Age interpretation that God is present “in” everyone. In *The Message*, Peterson introduces his readers—with no parenthetical warnings or explanations—to the concept of ‘Oneness’:

You have one Master, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who rules over all, works through all, and is present in all. Everything you are and think and do is permeated with Oneness.¹⁰

The “as above, so below” God “in” everything “Oneness” message of Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase *The Message* sounds strikingly similar to the same “as above, so below” God “in” everything “Oneness” message of the New Age/New Spirituality. Such a teaching is contrary to what the Bible teaches. We are only “one” in Christ Jesus when we repent of our sins and accept Him as our Lord and Savior. Galatians 3:26-28 states:

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (emphasis added)

4) The *Purpose Driven Life’s* Distorted View of Bible Prophecy

In *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren strongly discourages the study of prophecy. He states that “in essence” Jesus told his disciples: “The details of my return are none of your business.”¹¹ Contrary to what Warren writes, in Jesus’ discussion on the Mount of Olives, He tells His disciples that an understanding of the details of His return is very important. He provides much needed prophetic information so that His followers will not be

deceived about the details of His return at the end of time. In *Deceived on Purpose*, I explain:

He warns that there will be false teachers and false teachings that will try to confuse the details of His return. He provides the prophetic detail because He didn't want His disciples, or any of us, mistaking Antichrist's arrival for His own return. He initiates His lengthy prophetic discourse by saying, "Take heed that no man deceive you." He ends His discussion by warning them to "watch" and "be ready."¹²

As someone who has come out of New Age teachings, I find it very disturbing that Rick Warren writes that the details of Jesus' return are none of our business. In *Deceived on Purpose*, I talk about the role that these details had in my own eventual conversion:

Understanding the events surrounding His return was critical to understanding how badly I had been deceived by my New Age teachings. I had learned from reading the Bible that there is a false Christ on the horizon and that for a number of years I had unknowingly been one of his followers. Because the Bible's clear authoritative teachings about the real Jesus and His true return had been brought to my attention, I was able to see how deceived I was. By understanding that there is a false Christ trying to counterfeit the true Christ's return, I was able to renounce the false Christ I had been following and commit my life to the true Jesus Christ.¹³

5) Rick Warren and John Marks Templeton

Rick Warren unwittingly lent himself to the "purposes" of New Age sympathizer John Marks Templeton, as shown in *Deceived on Purpose*:

Even as I write, [New Age leader] Neale Donald Walsch’s New Age colleague Wayne Dyer is teaching the principles of the New Spirituality to an unsuspecting American public on a 3-hour PBS television special. His subject? The power of intention and purpose. While Dyer was cleverly presenting the New Spirituality by talking about the power of “purpose,” Rick Warren was judging a “Power of Purpose” essay contest for the New Age-based Templeton Foundation. John Templeton—with his strong New Age and metaphysical leanings—believes in a “shared divinity between God and humanity.”¹⁴

I pointed out that the late Templeton had been featured on the cover of Robert Schuller’s *Possibilities* magazine and was described as “my wonderful role model” by Neale Donald Walsch.

6) Robert Schuller’s Influence on Rick Warren

I discovered that Rick Warren had been greatly influenced by Robert Schuller and that he frequently used unattributed material from Schuller’s writings. In promoting his 2004 Robert H. Schuller Institute for Successful Church Leadership, Schuller stated that Warren was a graduate of his Institute.¹⁵ Furthermore, on an April 4, 2004 *Hour of Power* television broadcast, Schuller described how Warren had come to his Institute for Successful Church Leadership “time after time.”¹⁶ And Rick Warren’s wife, Kay, was quoted in a 2002 *Christianity Today* article saying that Schuller “had a profound influence on Rick.”¹⁷

In reading Schuller’s past writings, it soon became apparent that Schuller had indeed greatly influenced Rick Warren’s ministry and that Warren often used Schuller’s material without any attribution to Schuller.

One of the many examples where Warren emulates Schuller’s material can be seen in the following comparison of their writings. In his 1982 book *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*,

Robert Schuller writes:

Our very survival “as a species depends on hope. And without hope we will lose the faith that we can cope.”¹⁸

Twenty years later in his 2002 book *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren writes:

Hope is as essential to your life as air and water. You need hope to cope.¹⁹

Another example of how Rick Warren mirrors Robert Schuller is found in Warren’s 1995 book *The Purpose Driven Church*. He concludes his book by writing:

Accept the challenge of becoming a purpose-driven church! The greatest churches in history are yet to be built.²⁰

Rick Warren’s statement is almost a direct quote from Schuller’s 1986 book *Your Church Has A Fantastic Future!*, which quotes a pastor saying:

Ten years ago, I heard Dr. Robert Schuller say at his leadership conference, “The greatest churches in the world are yet to be built!”²¹

These are just two of many other examples I found where Rick Warren uses unattributed material from Schuller’s writings and teachings. In *Deceived on Purpose*, I wrote:

The more I read Robert Schuller, the more I was shocked at how so many of Rick Warren’s thoughts, ideas, references, words, terms, phrases, and quotes in *The Purpose Driven Life* seemed to be directly inspired by Schuller’s writings and teachings.²²

7) Rick Warren and Robert Schuller’s “New Reformation” & “God’s Dream”

Rick Warren’s proposed “New Reformation” and his “God’s Dream” Global P.E.A.C.E. Plan are strikingly similar to Robert Schuller’s proposed “New Reformation” and his “God’s Dream” plan “to redeem society.” The only real difference between their basic plans is that Schuller proposed his “New Reformation” and “God’s Dream” plan twenty years previous to Warren. In his 1982 book *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, Schuller called for a “New Reformation” in the church.²³ To accomplish this New Reformation he frequently invoked the metaphor “God’s Dream” to describe God’s “great plan to redeem society.”²⁴ Twenty years later, Warren was also calling for a “New Reformation” in the church.²⁵ To accomplish his proposed New Reformation, Warren also invoked the “God’s Dream” metaphor that Schuller had used over two decades earlier to describe his New Reformation and his “plan.”²⁶ Warren described his new reformational P.E.A.C.E. Plan as “God’s Dream For You—And The World!,”²⁷ which also happens to resemble the PEACE Plan proposed by Neale Donald Walsch.

In *Deceived on Purpose*, I wrote:

Following Schuller’s forty-year commitment to his church, Rick Warren made a forty-year commitment to the Saddleback community. He “grew” his mega-church by faithfully implementing all that he had learned from Schuller. . . . Now Schuller’s concept of “God’s Dream” was being used to inspire millions of Christians to get behind his [Warren’s] 5-Step P.E.A.C.E. Plan to “change the world”—a 5-Step P.E.A.C.E. Plan that, on paper, bore an eerie resemblance to the 5-Step PEACE Plan proposed by Neale Donald Walsch and his New Age “God.”²⁸

8) New Age Embraces Schuller's New Reformation

In Neale Donald Walsch's 2002 book, *The New Revelations*, Walsch and his New Age "God" praise Robert Schuller's ministry and laud Schuller's call for a New Reformation. Walsch describes how he and his "God" are also calling for a "New Reformation." In fact, they commend Schuller and believe that Schuller's New Reformation can merge with their plan to help bridge the divide between the Christian church and the teachings of the New Age/New Spirituality. They also present their New Reformation in the form of a 5-Step PEACE Plan²⁹ that is similarly put forth in the form of an acronym—much like Rick Warren's 5-Step P.E.A.C.E. Plan.³⁰ In *The New Revelations: A Conversation with God*, Walsch, in a conversation with his "God," states:

Rev. Robert H. Schuller, the American Christian minister who founded the famous Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, said twenty years ago in his book *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation* that what is needed is a second reformation within the Church, to move it away from its message of fear and guilt, retribution, and damnation, and toward a theology of self-esteem.³¹

Walsch quotes Schuller as saying that the "church" is "failing at the deepest level to generate within human beings that quality of personality that can result in the kinds of persons that would make our world a safe and sane society."³² Walsch continues his conversation with "God" about Robert Schuller:

Dr. Schuller went on to suggest that "sincere Christians and church-persons can find a theological launching point of universal agreement if they can agree on the universal right and uncompromising need of every person to be treated with great respect simply because he or she is a human being!"³³

Walsch then calls Schuller an “extraordinary minister” and quotes him again as saying:

“As a Christian, a theologian, and a churchman within the Reformed tradition, I must believe that it is possible for the church to exist even though it may be in serious error in substance, strategy, style or spirit.”³⁴

Walsch adds:

But, he [Schuller] said, ultimately “theologians must have their international, universal, transcreedal, transcultural, transracial standard.”³⁵

Walsch’s “God” answers Walsch:

Rev. Schuller was profoundly astute in his observations and incredibly courageous in making them public. *I hope he is proud of himself!*

I suggest that such an international, universal, transcreedal, transcultural, transracial standard for theology is the statement: “We Are All One. Ours is not a better way, ours is merely another way.”

This can be the gospel of a New Spirituality. It can be a kind of spirituality that gives people back to themselves.³⁶

I do not believe it is just coincidence that Neale Donald Walsch—like Robert Schuller and Rick Warren—is also calling for a New Reformation. Nor do I believe it is a coincidence that Walsch and his “God” identify with Schuller and suggest Schuller’s New Reformation as a prototype for their PEACE Plan. Nor do I believe it is a coincidence that Warren has also used Schuller’s New Reformation as the prototype for his P.E.A.C.E. Plan and

that both the New Age and Warren have devised 5-Step PEACE Plans to encourage their mutual calls for a New Reformation.

Other New Age leaders, like Bernie Siegel and Gerald Jampolsky also praise Robert Schuller and endorse his writings and teachings.³⁷ Jampolsky and Schuller have mutually endorsed each other's books.³⁸ In his book *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, Schuller favorably cites Jampolsky and praises the New Age leader for his "profound theology."³⁹ Yet it is Jampolsky who first introduced me to the teachings of *A Course in Miracles* when I was in the New Age movement. I would later discover to my amazement that *A Course in Miracle* groups were meeting on the grounds of Schuller's Crystal Cathedral back in 1985.⁴⁰ I would also learn that Schuller has had an ongoing relationship with his "dear friend" Gerald Jampolsky from the early 1980s up through the present day.⁴¹ And it is not surprising that Bernie Siegel—the New Age leader Rick Warren cites in *The Purpose Driven Life*—had been a long-time member of the Board of Advisors for Jampolsky's *A Course in Miracles*-based New Age Attitudinal Healing Centers.⁴²

9) The Implications of Schuller's Influence on Rick Warren

It became evident to me that Rick Warren was incorporating Robert Schuller's plans and teachings into the Evangelical church. Whether it is "God's Dream," God "in" everything, the "New Reformation," or something else, the non-referenced writings and teachings of Robert Schuller have been gradually introduced into the Evangelical church through Rick Warren. In *Deceived on Purpose*, I wrote:

[I]t seemed that one of Rick Warren's unstated purposes was to mainstream Robert Schuller's teachings into the more traditional "Bible-based" wing of the Church. Many believers who seem to trust Rick Warren, ironically, do not trust Robert Schuller. Rick Warren's "magic" seems to be able to

make the teachings of Robert Schuller palatable to believers who would have otherwise never accepted these same teachings had they come directly from Schuller himself.⁴³

Recognizing the overwhelming influence that Robert Schuller has had on Rick Warren and thousands of other pastors, I explain in *Deceived on Purpose* that “The Purpose Driven Church campaign to enlist every man, woman and child into its ranks to ‘do’ the P.E.A.C.E. Plan and to ‘do’ God’s Dream did not have its origins at Saddleback Church or in the singly inspired mind of Rick Warren.”⁴⁴ The spiritual foundation of the Purpose Driven movement can be found in the writings and teachings of Schuller’s fifty-year ministry. While Warren and other Christian leaders and organizations “forge new Purpose-Driven alliances around the world, the real architect of this seemingly unsinkable Purpose-Driven ship sits quietly in his office at the Crystal Cathedral.”⁴⁵

I found it very ironic that while evangelical pastors were studying and speaking at Schuller’s Institute for Successful Church Leadership, *A Course in Miracles* groups were also meeting in Crystal Cathedral classrooms. Apparently, these pastors “thought that Schuller knew what he was doing because he had a big ‘successful’ church, and they wanted one, too.”⁴⁶

10) A Serious Concern—A Sober Warning

I concluded *Deceived on Purpose* by stressing that it is not too late for Rick Warren to recognize how he has been influenced by Robert Schuller and by New Age teachings that are taking the church into the New Spirituality. I wrote:

He [Warren] could open many people’s eyes if he started to expose the differences between biblical Christianity and the deceptive teachings of the New Age and its New Spirituality.⁴⁷

However, I presented a sober warning regarding Rick Warren and other Christian leaders who remain in denial about the very real threat of this pervasive spiritual deception that will seriously endanger many who are trusting in their judgment. I explained:

Sadly, if Rick Warren and other Christian leaders fall for New Age schemes and devices rather than exposing them, they will take countless numbers of sincere people down with them. It will be the blind leading the blind, as they fall further and further into the deceptive ditch of the New Age and its New Spirituality. Undiscerning Christians, who think they are on “the narrow way” preparing the way for Jesus Christ, may discover too late that they had actually been on “the broad way” preparing the way for Antichrist. It is not too late to warn everyone, but it must be done soon before the deception advances any further.⁴⁸

It's Not About Rick Warren

When *Deceived on Purpose* was published in August 2004, I knew the book would be controversial. The New Age implications I had discussed—particularly in regard to Robert Schuller’s influence on Rick Warren—had not to my knowledge been raised before. As I stated in *Deceived on Purpose*, my concerns were not personal issues (Matthew 18) between Rick Warren and myself. Because Warren’s book was in the public arena and had been sold and distributed to millions of people, I was approaching Warren and his readers in that same public arena. I wrote my comments respectfully and backed them with Scripture and primary source material. In his previous book *The Purpose Driven Church*, Warren had written, “I try to learn from critics.”⁴⁹ Therefore, I hoped he would seriously consider the New Age implications I had brought out regarding his Purpose Driven movement. Would he

begin to see what the New Age was really doing? Would he make some adjustments in the way he was presenting things? Would he recognize the necessity to protect the church from the New Age/New Spirituality?

Ultimately, *Deceived on Purpose* wasn’t about Rick Warren. It was about the schemes of our spiritual adversary—an adversary that the Bible refers to as Satan and “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4). It was about how this adversary uses undiscerning church leaders like Robert Schuller, Rick Warren, and others to further his cunningly devised New Age/New Spirituality. But would Warren and his Saddleback staff recognize how they were being used? And what would be their response—if any—to my book? After *Deceived on Purpose* was released, it didn’t take long to get my answers.

For more information on A “Wonderful” Deception, [click here](#).

Endnotes:

Preface

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Introduction

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2. John Heidenry, *Theirs Was The Kingdom: Lila and DeWitt Wallace & The Story of the Reader’s Digest* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), p. 252; book was brought to my attention by Discernment Ministries.

3. Information provided by Reader's Digest Association Inc. via a telephone conversation with Warren Smith, April 2009.

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2. Warren Smith, *Deceived on Purpose*, op. cit., pp. 155-159.

3. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, op. cit., p. 88.

4. Warren Smith, *Deceived on Purpose*, op. cit., p. 82.

5. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, op. cit., p. 19 (footnote #3), p. 20 (footnote #6), p. 31 (footnote #11).

6. Ronald S. Miller and the Editors of *New Age Journal*, *As Above, So Below: Paths to Spiritual Renewal in Daily Life* (Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1992), p. xi, quoted in Warren Smith, *Deceived on Purpose*, op. cit., p. 32.

7. Ibid.

8. "As Above, So Below" (http://www.themystica.com/mystica/articles/a/below_above.html).

9. See: http://www.mothermaryspeaks.com/as_above_so_below.htm.

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11. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, op. cit., p. 285.

12. Warren Smith, *Deceived on Purpose*, op. cit., p. 146.

13. Ibid., p. 147.

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15. "2004 Robert H. Schuller Institute" (*Powerlines: Monthly News for Hour of Power Spiritual Shareholders and Friends*, http://web.archive.org/web/20031017043658/www.hourofpower.org/powerlines/09.03/2004_robert_schuller_institute.cfm); Warren Smith, *Deceived on Purpose*, op. cit., p. 103.
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