
SEEKER FRIENDLY CHURCHES

This is now all the rage, church services geared to getting in the unsaved. Church is made to order for the ungodly. All must be easy-going and entertaining. There is no fear of God, neither is there judgment, sin, repentance or hell! The people they are trying to win will not come and listen to those things. However, one researcher said that in reality, only 10% -15% of the attendees are from among the unchurched. Most of their "converts" are siphoned off from smaller churches, being drawn by the carnal attractions. Willow Creek (Bill Hybels) and Saddleback (Rick Warren) are prime movers in this pseudo-gospel endeavor. A recent visitor to Willow Creek spoke of swans gliding across a mirror lake, an extensive eating area, supplied by five vendors, where one can watch the service on a giant screen while enjoying a meal. Rick Warren, whose book *The Purpose Driven Life* has sold over 7 million copies, majors in religious entertainment. His book is full of psychological principles. "The reader is told that his genetic makeup, physical features, talents, personality, the details of his daily life, are exactly what God has foreordained." His church sponsors many "12 Step" programs (similar to Alcoholics Anonymous). Here are a few examples: Adult Children of Chemical Addicted, Codependency, Co-Addicted Women in a Relationship, Sexually Addicted Men, etc. Warren has attended Robert Schuller's school. Shuller has claimed that he is the true originator of the "marketing approach to Christianity." No doubt he is! You will find no real Gospel in his church, for he says that what we need to be saved from is a negative self image. Most, if not all, of the churches sponsoring this sort of thing have rock bands, short sermons filled with jokes or amusing stories, come as you are philosophy, etc. It is religion designed to please the carnal nature of the unsaved. They are getting people in, but they are not bringing people to a true knowledge of Jesus Christ. How can you do that without preaching on sin, hell and repentance? God's message never has been popular - just read the Bible. About one hundred and twenty-five years ago Spurgeon spoke of a similar trend: "The tendency of the time is towards bigness, parade, and show of power... men are getting tired of the divine plan; they are going to be saved by the priest...by the music...by the theatricals."

The above is a product of the New Evangelical crowd, but some fundamental Baptists are buying into it. Many fundamental Baptist churches have removed "Baptist" from their names. It is too offensive. Why is that? While there are many liberal Baptist churches, those who do preach the old-time Gospel are largely Baptist - try to find many other groups that are preaching the true Word of God. Many once fundamental Baptist churches are delving into the "Purpose Driven" philosophy. A recent *FBIS News Service* article dealt with several. I'll just mention two; the first is the well-known Temple Baptist Church of Detroit. "This church was pastored by Frank Norris and then G. Beauchamp Vick from 1950 to 1975. Vick was one of the founders of the BBFI in 1950. It was a church that eschewed ecumenism, preached strong Baptist doctrine, promoted holy living, and separation from the world. It also used only the King James Bible. Vick said: 'It's become fashionable to use many versions of the Bible today....This King James Bible, our English Bible, the Bible of our fathers and our mothers, is the one that has come floating down to us upon the blood of the Christian martyrs, our forefathers. It has been the one text of the Baptist Bible College (no longer true), and it will be as long as I have anything to do with this school.' In 1990 the church got a young new pastor. The church began having CCM concerts in the early 1990's. By 1996 they featured Michael Card, who is radically ecumenical. By 2000 the church changed its name to Northridge Church of Plymouth (no Baptist). The music has gotten ever more hard. In Sept. 2003 they hosted Sonic Flood, and Charlie Hall was scheduled to be there in October. The church is scheduled to host Darlene Zschech, who promotes ecumenism and unscriptural charismatic practices. Landmark Baptist Church, Cincinnati, OH was pastored by John Rawlings for 43 years (1951-94). In 1996 the church featured a Campus Crusade band playing 'high energy '50's and 60's rock and roll.' The church website says, "Being a firm believer that church should be fun and on the edge, Matt puts all his energy into making Landmark a place where everyone belongs.' The pop group Jump5 is scheduled to perform at Landmark..." These people say, we're not changing the message, just the methods. That was the cry of Billy Graham 50 years ago. First of all, God is not pleased when you package the Gospel in the filthy garb of the world. It doesn't take much discernment to see that the message must also change if you are going to cater to the worldly crowd. **"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."**

The **CORNERSTONE CHALLENGE**

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