Purpose Driven movement

This movement began with the teaching of Rick Warren, an evangelical and a Southern Baptist senior pastor of the megachurch called Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California. The movement originally began as a paradigm taught to pastors worldwide to help them be more effective leaders. Details are included in his 1995 book, *The Purpose Driven Church*. In 2002 he wrote *The Purpose Driven Life* as a 40-day devotional book. Both books are international best-sellers with millions of copies in print and have been shared worldwide in churches, conferences, seminars, etc. Warren has also authored many other “Christian” books. He is also the major “catalyst” for the emerging church movement and heavily endorses contemplative prayer. He promotes other emerging church leaders such as Bill Hybels (pastor and founder in 1975 of the non-denominational megachurch Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago, Illinois); Leonard Sweet (Methodist preacher into mystic beliefs); and Brian McLaren (influential evangelical pastor and author, on the board of Emergent Village, and founding pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church in Maryland).

Warren’s two Purpose Driven books minimize doctrine (the true gospel) and stress entertainment and the “something for everyone” approach. In *The Purpose Driven Church* book, Warren states: “Are there unrepentant pagans mixed into Saddleback’s crowd of 10,000? Without a doubt . . . that’s okay. Jesus said . . . Don’t worry about the tares . . . .” Incredibly, that same mindset is found in the SDA Church.

Many SDAs have gone to Saddleback and Willow Creek churches to learn their programs. The *Adventist Review* for December 18, 1997 featured an article by Andy Nash that recommended visiting Willow Creek. The church has three weekend services with about 23,000 attendees and is the first-largest church in the U.S. It is interesting that Nash stated in the *Adventist Review* article that he was grateful for Willow Creek, because it prompted his former academy church, Forest Lake (Florida) to get “intentional about worship” and that his SDA relatives and friends now “recognized their natural abilities,” including drama. At the beginning of 2011, the following SDA churches were listed as belonging to the Willow Creek Association:

http://www.willowcreek.com/membership/profilesearch.asp
California: Alhambra; La Mesa; Palo Cedro; Placerville; Rocklin-Sunset Oaks; Westminster Good Samaritan
Florida: Forest Lake; Florida Hospital
Colorado: Newday Christian
Idaho: Lifesource Community; Oasis
Maryland: New Hope; Spencerville
North Carolina: Foster
Utah: Wasatch Hills
Washington: Anacortes Adventist Fellowship; Connections

Below is just a small list of SDA churches that have or are still promoting the Purpose Driven movement.

**Portsmouth SDA Church, New Hampshire**
http://www.portsmouthsdachurch.org/Pastor_%20Johnson.htm
Pastor Phil Johnson recommends that new believers read *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren, which he describes as “40 short, biblically-based chapters on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.”

**Pleasant Hill SDA Church, California**
http://www.pleasanthilladventist.org/podcasts
A sermon by Chris Estay on January 16, 2010 was entitled “The Purpose Driven Church” and discussed ideas by Rick Warren.

**Tunapuna SDA Church, Trinidad & Tobago**
“The purpose driven life” sermon by Henry Sookra on Sabbath, November 3, 2007 included eight listed purposes.

**Hillcrest SDA Church, Nashville, Tennessee**
http://www.hillcrestsdachurch.org/PDF%20Files/November21.pdf
Announcements, Sabbath, November 21, 2009
“Hillcrest’s Purpose Driven Youth Ministries”
This church also recommends rock/contemporary gospel.

**Carmichael SDA Church, California**
June 14, 2003 bulletin announced Friday nights as time to discuss the book “The Purpose Driven Life” as a way to “discover purpose for your life.” Contemporary music and refreshments were included.

This church also held a marriage seminar (by a non-SDA ministry) entitled “Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage.” While it may have had some good ideas, would it not have been better to have a seminar based on the Bible and *The Adventist Home* book by Ellen White?

The For My People Ministry received an email describing a marriage seminar held by another SDA Church. It was advertised as “Movie Night for Couples Only” and used the book *Empowering Couples: Building on Your Strengths* by David and Amy Olson. This is what the correspondent shared: “I find it strange that ministers promote this book rather than *The Adventist Home* by Ellen White. In fact, no mention is ever made of it to new members. It is saddening to witness how our churches easily ignore counsels and warnings contained in the Spirit of Prophecy and enthusiastically reach out to embrace teachings from non Seventh-day Adventists. It is shocking and baffling.”

It is also enlightening to know that David is the president and Amy the research associate at Life Innovations. David has received many awards from nationwide organizations, is a member of the American Psychological Association, has written over 20 books and 100 journal articles, and has appeared on numerous shows, including NBC Today Show, CBS Morning Show, and Oprah.

**Riverside Community Church, California**

http://www.riversidecommunitychurch.com

This is a Purpose Driven church that uses Natural Church Development “to build a healthy church family.” The current pastor, Eric Brown, is a nationally certified Coach Trainer, who occasionally travels to train Natural Church Development coaches. But most weekends “you’ll find him doing something just a little bit crazy as he finds ways to make the Bible easy to understand and memorable.”

Worship Services have included:

- “Jesus Jungle Jam” for children ages 6-12 who are sent home with “tons of God goodies.”
- “Junior High Jolt!” for 7th and 8th graders.
- “High School Surge!” that is “fun, real, and if you plug-in, you can get SHOCKed.”
- A variety of adult Bible study options in which the “GodSpot” host can give assistance.
- A contemporary worship service in which dress is “come-as-you-are casual.”
- “Toast n’ Jam,” a time to get together before the morning service to “share in some food and fellowship and have an impromptu worship ‘jam session’ experience” where you have “plenty of time to grab something to eat and still be in your seats on time for the 11 am service.”

The Celebrate Recovery 12 step program is also available. The evening ends with Solid Rock Café.

This church would do well to ask the Lord’s forgiveness for using His name so lightly. Additionally, grabbing food and getting to your seat in time sounds like buying food at a theater and getting to your seat in time for the movie. Is this the low level that our churches have reached? Is it all just about food and entertainment? That is certainly what the world has indoctrinated humanity with.

The Reach SDA Church, West Richland, Washington
http://www.gotothereach.com/cms
This church website included the following information:

- Involved with “40 Days of Community” (a part of the Purpose Driven movement).
- Links to sermons by Morris Venden on faith.
- Worship with drama and the “BackStage” praise band.
- Worships “vibrantly casually” so that all members may “comfortably visit / share / mingle / empathize together without care for a written or unwritten code of dress or conduct.”
- Promotion of small groups for fellowship as a way to provide an environment in which to safely confess, grow, and share struggles together in order to “be free of the unhealthiness we know we have inside.”

Counsels for the Church, p. 304: Sin of a private character is to be confessed to Christ, the only mediator between God and man. For "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. Every sin is an offense against God and is to be confessed to Him through Christ. Every open sin should be as openly confessed. Wrong done to a fellow being should be made right with the one who has been offended. If any who are seeking health have been guilty of evilspeaking, if they have sowed discord in the home, the neighborhood,
or the church, and have stirred up alienation and dissension, if by any wrong practice they have led others into sin, these things should be confessed before God and before those who have been offended.

It was explained that Jesus showed us what small groups can provide, since He had a group of twelve disciples and also an intimate group of three (Peter, James, and John.) This reasoning sounds quite innocent, until one learns what it is really about.

Yes, small groups are fine, but what is being taught? If a person has not responded to the true gospel, accepting Rick Warren’s methods will definitely not help. The idea that as times change the church must change with them comes from the fallen one who hates true worship and will do all he can to send souls to their eternal death. Misery loves company. It is obvious that the Purpose Driven movement is not driven by God’s purposes.

Emerging Church Plants
http://www.goodnewsatlanta.net/network/emerging_church_plants
This website shows the SDA Emerging Church Plants in the Atlanta, Georgia area. The following website was listed as a resource: http://www.purposedriven.com

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