

Purpose-Driven Churches (Part 4)

Not Built On The Sayings Of Jesus Christ

John W. Ritenbaugh

Given 08-Jul-06; Sermon #783

We are going to begin this sermon by turning to Isaiah 53:2-3. I think that all of you would recognize immediately just from the chapter that it is speaking of Christ.

Isaiah 53:2-3 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground: he has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

When I finished the previous sermon in this latest series on the Outcome-Based religions, I think I had established the following conclusion that the various Outcome-Based religions are an attractive and formidable alternative to any seeking some spiritual help at this time in American history.

As we begin this sermon, my emphasis is on the word "attractive." I began with these verses because I wanted to give you, by way of contrast, this description of Jesus. None of this is given in Isaiah 53 to suggest that Jesus was ugly. Rather the emphasis is on the fact that He was "common." He was like other men. Nothing about Him in terms of His physical appearance stood out to draw people's attention to Him. He did not possess the kind of stature, build, or visage that people were drawn to.

When He began His ministry, He did not hail from a city that inspired people to be impressed, and neither did He have any scholastic pedigree obtained from attending a rabbinical school. He did have an impressive family pedigree, but even that was in dispute because people were thinking He was illegitimate.

In the same manner, His spiritual wife, which is the Church of God, will not be naturally attractive to carnal people. This is not to say we are repellant, but neither are people drawn to it. Herbert Armstrong used to say that when Billy Graham went into a city leading one of his crusades, the attendance would increase every night. But when Herbert Armstrong went to a city, it decreased every night.

God has filled the Church of God with reasonably intelligent people, but even He says in His word that "not many mighty"—that is, the renown of this world—have been called.

But as Paul says in another place, God has called people who are weak by the world's standards, small in number, but rich in faith. We are rich in faith because we have shown a willingness to believe God and to submit to His standard of righteousness.

However, with the New Paradigm churches, or the Outcome-Based religion—whichever word you want to go by—the primary evidence of *their* attractiveness is their rapid membership growth as witnessed in their huge congregations and Sunday service attendance. Combined with this is the amount of space given them and their leaders in the nation's media, and the concern that is expressed by this media by competing organizations' religions.

Commotion almost always garners people's attention. The attention paid to these organizations' leaders is growing. It is not subsiding in the least. Witness the coverage of the nation's media given to Rick Warren. If you have not heard of him, you will be hearing of him. He is the pastor of the Saddleback Community Church, and he personally is given a great deal of attention. People who matter in terms of religion probably give his books even more attention. We will get to a little bit more of that later.

In addition, it seems as though the media literally trumpets any program that these people formulate. For example, there was in very recent memory the one they called "Forty Days of Community," and most recently, the announcement of their latest program called "Forty Days of Peace" which is now underway, beginning in Rwanda in Africa. Incidentally, these programs are not limited to forty days. That is just a catchy title to gather people's interest.

I am giving these messages because I want you to be prepared well enough so that you at least understand the foundation of where these organizations stand before God. Doctrinally and philosophically, they are way off base. Those two factors do not matter much to the vast majority of American people who are well on their way to being almost totally secularized just like Europe. However, at the same time these memberships still have yearnings for religious instruction despite the drift to secularization.

I do not know how effective the programs of the Outcome-Based religions are going to be outside the United States of America. It may not work particularly well among non-Israelitish people. One of the reasons that it does work well among Israelitish people is that they have a biblical background that is peculiar to them. Combined with the factors arising from the Israelitish nations' very intense industrialization, the Outcome-Based religions' concepts are working well.

I am concerned, because at this point in time I believe this growth of public attention is

going to continue to increase and attract more and more people. The package these people have put together to produce the outcome that the leadership wants works.

I Peter 3:14 But and if you suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are you; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.

I do not want you to be troubled about the huge growth and the influence that these people are later going to have. I think it is going to be massive because they are just scratching the surface of their potential. But here is the advice to you:

I Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear [or with deep respect].

I chose this verse because of its setting in the epistle, combined with what is happening outside right now, and what I think is going to happen religiously in the fairly near future.

I think most of you know that I Peter's overall theme is "hope." Five times in this brief epistle, Peter uses the Greek word "hope" for either a noun or a verb. In fact the word "hope" appears in verse 15. Now I Peter's hope is the program and the outcome **we** must desire and participate in with all of our being. At the very beginning of verse 15, Peter stated that one of the major actions we must take to ensure the correct outcome in *our* life is to "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts."

I think that we all know that sanctify means "set apart." But let us make it even clearer. Sanctify means "consecrate." Sanctify means "make Christ special above all things in your life." Peter adds to this that Christ is to be special in our heart. Now why? Because biblically, Proverbs 4:23 says, "Out of the heart are the well-springs of life." In biblical terminology, it is the heart that is the source of a person's attitudes, words, and conduct. Remember, Jesus said, "Out of the heart proceeds. . .". In this case an evil context. According to the Bible, it is the heart that produces motivations to act, and the attitude that goes with that action.

One more adjustment to this verse's translation is helpful to understanding really very emphatic instruction Peter is giving here. Modern commentators say "a legitimate rearrangement of the words of the first phrase is in order." Thus they rephrase it as: "Sanctify Christ as Lord God." They use the same words. They just changed them around a little bit. "Sanctify Christ as the Lord God." The reason they changed it is

because it puts the emphasis in the right place. It emphasizes more strongly the One we must look to for authority—Christ. It is interesting that Peter calls Him not just the Lord, but the Lord God. He is our Creator after all.

Do you comprehend the rephrasing application to these sermons regarding Outcome-Based religion? Sanctifying the Lord God is the very thing that the Outcome-Based religions are NOT doing. They are not setting Christ apart as special. They are not consecrating Him before their people. Though they frequently use His name and they identify themselves as a Christian religion, they will cast aside any doctrine of Christ that stands in the way of the outcome they desire.

They will cast aside any doctrine that stands in the way of the hope their leadership desires to achieve because they know that the doctrines of Christ will divide and will destroy the unity of their program. So the casting aside of Christ's doctrines gives us strong evidence that they have set themselves up as God's equal, thus stamping idolatry as their sin. This setting aside of Christ's doctrines is not done out of mere weakness, but is done deliberately in order to preserve their brand of unity. They have unity, but it is not because they are consecrating Christ as their Lord. Never forget that at the foundation of what is wrong with their operation is that they are nowhere near doctrinal purity.

We are going to go on to a connected element of what is erroneous with the Outcome-Based religions' doctrines and their base of operation. In Psalm 74, and we are going to look at verse 12. When you get a chance, read this whole Psalm because it is very helpful to anybody who feels like he is going through trouble and God has gone way off somewhere, not even hearing what he is saying.

Psalm 74:12 For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

This confident statement is right at the end of the psalmist's lament, which actually begins in verse one. It is right at the beginning of his praise for God's past demonstration of His power. He is saying that despite how bad things look, God is still working toward **His** positive end or goal. Our responsibility is to continue to trust God while He does things only He can do, and that means trust in the way and the timing in which He does them. This we will do if we are consecrating Christ as Lord in our hearts.

In my previous sermon I showed you toward the end of one of the sections of the sermon that they are basically saying that "the end justifies the means" in their

operations. But that philosophy which undergirds the Outcome-Based religion organizations is not necessarily wrong in some of daily life. We can make shortcuts here and there and it is not going to do any kind of damage when we are doing things. But let me warn you that in religion, taking shortcuts will *never, never, ever* do. Now why? Because, when engaging in God's work, the end never justifies the means. God's work must always be done God's way.

Remember, in the previous sermon in this series I opened with Proverbs 14:12 which states that "there is a way which seems right to men." I am going to give you a really far out example, but I hope that the illustration will make the point.

Suppose a church decides that it needs money for some kind of a program they want to put together. So the church officials—the board of directors and the deacons, or whatever—meet together with the pastor, and they propose in their meeting to install a plan to raise the money they need. That is the outcome that they want, and therefore there are looking for ways to increase their income.

Someone proposes that the church could raise money by operating a Bingo parlor, because after all, that seems to be pretty popular with the elderly. They spend their money freely, hoping they will win a little bit of money and burn up some time, yelling "Bingo." They feel they have had a really good time.

Well, another person suggests that maybe they could promote another way, and that is they would raffle off an automobile. Back where I come from they did that pretty often. They would have a shiny red Buick convertible out there, and they would be selling these tickets for such and such church activity fund, or whatever. They did that often during the summer. Practically every corner you looked at, a church was raffling off an automobile.

But in hacking these things around, the board of directors and the pastor and so forth decided that those proposals are too slow, too small, and too limited. There is another way that is much more lucrative. They decide that in these days the best thing they can do is to sell drugs.

You all kind of snickered a little bit. You know that would not do, but that is the point in the illustration. The reason it is the point is that the Bible shows God's way—Christ's way—is for the church to trust *Him* to supply all its needs and thus operate on what He provides through the freely-given tithes and offerings sent to the church by those who believe, or by those God lays on their heart to give an offering.

This easily understood principle is that there are no shortcuts, no justifiable, verbal, attitude, or conduct maneuvering around what God clearly shows. "I will provide for you." That is what He said. "I will provide all your needs according to His riches in glory by Jesus Christ." It says that in Philippians, chapter 4.

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime [in the Old Testament] were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures [written aforetime] might have hope.

We are still on this theme of "hope." Let us ask a question then. Did God need any help supplying two and one-half to three million Israelites in the wilderness with whatever they needed to make it all the way into the Promised Land? Did He not give them food? Did He not give them water? Did He not give them shade over their heads? Did He not fight battles for them? Of course He did. This is a rather obvious example for us, but this principle about supplying our needs applies in many more places, far more than money, or far more than food. He will supply *all* of our needs.

Now listen carefully to this. There are two kinds of people on earth: the converted and the unconverted. But let me redefine this a little bit further and more specifically. There are two kinds of people on earth: those who believe *explicitly* what God says, and those who do not. Those who explicitly believe God do not try to justify their way around what God says in order to get around Him in some way.

But we are going to refine this a little bit more. There are only two kinds of people on earth: those who not only believe God, but *trust* Him, even with their very life, and those who do not. That is climbing Mount Everest, I agree, but that is exactly where God is leading us. We trust Him for everything. This does not mean that we will not have to do anything. Those things we have to do are obvious, but God is looking for a people who believe Him explicitly, and trust Him at the same time.

I understood an application of this simple principle twenty years ago when the WCG (Worldwide Church of God) administration began to change doctrine. One of the most vital of all needs that God supplies is correct doctrine. How can one possibly get to the place God wants one to end if one does not have correct doctrine, the correct pathway of teachings to get there? The answer is obvious. We will not, because what we are working with God to accomplish must be done God's way. There are no shortcuts, no end to justify the means. There is a reason for this.

I think it was back in 1988 when the then new administration of the Worldwide Church of

God made a couple of seemingly minor changes to some seemingly minor doctrine. I am going to quote what I said to Evelyn. I said to her, "They are not going to be able to stop making adjustments because each individual doctrine does not stand alone."

You see, the simple truth is that each individual doctrine is inextricably linked with God's entire program like a picture puzzle. One piece of the puzzle seemingly stands alone, but it fits in a specific place in the overall picture, and if that piece is not in its specific place, the whole picture is ruined to some degree. We are talking about purpose here. Sometimes we have to really go to the end in order to understand the principle. You cannot just pluck things out and justify going around what God says.

All the doctrines together form a complete package for the production of a finished product, and that product is God's children in God's character image, inheriting God's family Kingdom. False doctrine alters God's intended outcome. You ought to be able to fit that principle into the Outcome-Based religions, whose leadership throws out doctrines that might destroy their unity.

We are going to take a look at some easy-to-understand principles here. We are going to go to I Corinthians 5:6 and look at three scriptures together. You will begin to recognize something right away.

I Corinthians 5:6 Your glorying is not good. Know you not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

How about a little leaven of the wrong doctrine? Do you think it would leaven the whole lump? The whole lump is the whole doctrinal picture—the hope.

I Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons.

This is the same general principle. A doctrine of the demon can be a leaven in terms of achieving the hope.

Hebrews 3:7-10 Wherefore (as the Holy Spirit says, Today if you will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation,

Purpose-Driven Churches (Part 4) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)
and said, They do always err in their heart, and they have not known my ways.

Notice, "they do always err in their heart"—that area we have to protect so carefully and vigorously.

Hebrews 3:11-12 So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

Are the Outcome-Based religions departing from the living God? Oh, yes! If anything stands in the way of their achieving *their* hope, they will cast that doctrine aside, and so a piece of the puzzle gets thrown out. "I cannot figure where this fits." It does not fit what they think the picture is, and therefore they throw it out.

Hebrews 3:13-14 But exhort one another daily while it is called Today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

So "The end justifies the means" principle subtly promotes a creeping apostasy that is illustrated by the "frog in the boiling water" principle. This is why Paul said apostasy only promotes more apostasy. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. If the end or the goal one desires to be reached is wrong—and their end is not in agreement with the Bible—it cannot do anything but suddenly force one to make adjustment as to how even that wrong goal will be reached. This is why I began this with the comment I made about 20 years ago in 1988. I understood this principle, and it is the same principle that blew the Worldwide Church of God apart. The first thing you know, over a period between 1988 and 1995, the WCG was destroyed. One doctrine after another was adjusted in order to agree with the outcome, with the end the new administration in the Worldwide Church of God had devised in their carnal wisdom.

You might notice the word "departed" in Hebrews 3:12. It is the Greek word *aphistemi* and it is the root of our English word apostasy. It is exactly the same word that is translated "depart" in I Timothy 4:1.

Now back to the Israelites in the wilderness. They are one of the Bible's primary

negative examples of this destructive principle at work against those who submit to turning aside from what they originally agreed to.

When they began leaving Egypt, the Israelites loved the concept of freedom from their slavery. They greatly desired the hope of having their own land because it represented even greater freedom and prosperity besides. But as we would say today, many of them had their reservations about certain things. One of the things that many had reservations about was Moses and his authority.

Individually, they did not buy into the whole package that God presented at Mount Sinai. Step by step, Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy reveal their disbelief through their conduct as events unfolded as they moved toward the Promised Land. As you know, this began almost immediately. In fact, it began while Moses was still up on Mount Sinai with God. That is how quickly they began to turn aside. It did not take very long for these people to begin fudging on their responsibilities. Those responsibilities are the duties that they imposed upon themselves whenever they agreed to the terms of the Old Covenant.

Now we have agreed to the terms of the New Covenant, so this needs to be applied in our own lives. We can look over there at the Outcome-Based religion, and maybe we can see their errors pretty clearly because we are judging from a background of believing what God's Word says. We can see that they are not meeting the standard, but we have to judge ourselves against the Old Testament's example. That is what Paul just said in Romans 15:4. Are we doing the same thing in principle that they did? I hope not. It is because of this very thing and the reason Paul stated in Hebrews 3:13, "Do not harden your heart."

Let us go now to Hebrews 4:1-3. By the time we get to this place, Paul is reaching a sort of conclusion. It is not the conclusion to the whole book, but it is an important conclusion of what he had just discussed with the people in chapter 3.

Hebrews 4:1-3 Let us therefore fear [stand in awe; be respectful of the example of the Israelites], lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest; although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

In other words, the hope that God was drawing these people towards had already been established before the people, and God had established it in His own mind before He even began the whole project. "This is where I am going to take them." So how many made it? Joshua, and Caleb, and probably their families. Two families of people. All the rest altered the responsibilities that they had agreed to. They altered their hope. They did not sanctify God as Lord, their Master in their hearts, and so they went off the path, and they ended up dead. Each person made his own adjustment as he went along.

That is a stunning record of this principle that "a little leaven leavens the whole lump." How much leaven does the Outcome-Based religion have in it? For you and me it may be easily seen, but if we cannot learn anything from this, what good does it do to look at them? We have to recognize that we have taken on responsibilities because we have made the New Covenant with God. The responsibilities of the New Covenant are that we are to explicitly believe in God and trust Him.

In one sense it is exactly the same thing that the Israelites were required to do, but in another sense the standards are a great deal higher for us now. We have a great deal more help than they did. The responsibility in one sense, brethren, is even greater for us. "To whom much is given, the much more is required." We have far more in terms of knowledge. We have far more in terms of spiritual help. They did not have access to God. We do.

In Hebrews 4:1-3, Paul states clearly why they failed so miserably. They simply did not believe what Moses said, and so they did not reach the "rest." So please, brethren, do not shut your mind. Do not harden your hearts, because we are dealing with the same God. He will act and react consistently. We have to learn to listen to the warning lesson of Israel's example in the wilderness. That is there for our benefit that we are not to do as they did. We are to follow Joshua. We are to follow Caleb, because they were following Christ.

Now does this mean in any way that I am saying that the Church of the Great God, or even the whole Church of God, has perfect doctrine? Not at all, brethren. That seems to me to be pretty presumptuous to assume such a thing. However, from what I am able to judge, the Church of God is so far ahead of whoever is in second place, they are almost out of sight by comparison.

We have seen one major violation of biblical principles that has established the explosive growth of the Outcome-Based religions, and that is to make growth of membership the standard for success. But there are other principles that are hand-in-glove with this approach. Actually, before we are done with this whole series, we are

going to see a lot of things that add to this approach they have, but I will show you that as we proceed. There are seven major ones that seem to under gird all of the others.

Along with the growth of membership goal for the church, they have elevated the value of fellowship above the value of truth. Mark that one down in your notes. Another way of stating this is that they have forsaken the superiority of correct doctrine in favor of unity which they call "**community**." We will see more of that a little bit later too, because that word "community" has very interesting attachment to things that are taking place completely apart from the world of religion. Not really so completely apart, but there is an interesting tie. They call their unity "**community**."

The application of these two issues is really interesting. They are attracting many people into their fellowship. These people hold with many, many different concepts of God, and what is important to life, and "reaching for the goal," as they would say. What do you think they are reaching for? It is not the Kingdom of God. It is heaven. That is what they will say. They are hoping to get to heaven; just like the rest, you might say.

As I go into this, do not forget that the leadership knows very well that true doctrine divides. They also know that the membership will talk among themselves about what they believe. That is pretty natural. So, besides a strong emphasis on impacting on people's feelings during the course of their services, is there anything else they can do to prevent the alienation of and thus the splitting off of, or into other groups and forming other congregations? They thought about that, and the answer is yes. One of the attitudes and character qualities the leadership makes strenuous effort to instill in its membership is "tolerance."

I want you to turn again to Romans 15. We are going to tie three scriptures together. Remember, we are looking at the principle of tolerance and the application they make of it. It might be good for you to begin thinking of what you think the word "tolerance" means. I will tell you what it is, and what *they* believe the word "tolerance" means.

Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. [That seems like a very good principle, does it not?]

Galatians 6:1-2 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear you one another's burden, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Here again the principle we are looking at is "tolerance," or bearing with those who are weak or have a problem or whatever. This word "tolerance" seems to fit right into those things as the Christian thing to do.

I Thessalonians 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

After seeing these three verses, you might ask, "What is so bad about preaching tolerance? Are we not supposed to endure and put up with the weaknesses of others as they overcome, and as we overcome our personal faults as well?" But did you notice, even though we are to be tolerant of one another in our weaknesses and in their weaknesses, at the same time the apostle Paul did *not* say, "Just stand there and do nothing." He said, "In kindness correct them." In meekness correct them, even to the point that if somebody is unruly—do you just put up with or tolerate that person's actions within the congregation? Now we most certainly do teach people to be tolerant.

Now back to the Outcome-Based religion. The leadership of those organizations knows that the people who are attracted to their services have backgrounds with built-in prejudices that may strongly resist the leadership's drive to their concepts of unity, and these resisting people may upset the leadership's apple-cart.

In a previous sermon, I warned you that we are going to come across terms that they have redefined to fit the outcome they hope to achieve. The word "tolerate" is one of them. To us tolerance means "gently bear with." To them it means "accept the other person and his belief without reservation." Did you catch the difference? "Accept the other person and his belief without reservation." It does not matter what the person believes. It is more important they have the brand of unity the leadership desires than it is to risk losing somebody because they believe something different.

This is really interesting. In plain language, the other person does not have to repent of his attitudes toward God. He does not have to get his beliefs regarding God and His doctrines from the Bible. It does not matter to them. Their membership's beliefs can come out of Hinduism, Buddhism, or Confucianism. You name it. "We will tolerate, we will accept that person without reservation." They have elevated unity and fellowship above truth.

Their concept of unity does not demand belief in and adherence to a central core of truths, which the Bible absolutely insists upon. Their teaching regarding tolerance is one

of the most deceptively stupid theological concepts I have ever come across in my life. This teaching works only because of the membership's ignorance, the feel-good social atmosphere that shall blind them, and the membership's stiff-necked unwillingness to believe God and the Bible. Instead, they are easily persuaded to believe philosophers and psychologists.

This principle these people are working with is the very principle that Communists used to take over nations. They would go into a nation and they would use terms those people were familiar with, but to the Communists it meant something different from what it did to those people.

Ephesians 4:1-6 [This is what the Christian is supposed to give his life over to.] I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation [the work] wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring [working hard] to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

That is pretty clear. Here is the Bible's clearly stated standard of unity. Notice that each true son of God is obligated to humbly submit to God's standard in order to achieve unity; not the Buddhists standard, or the Hindu standard, or the Confucius standard, or the New Age standard, but **God's** standard in order to achieve unity.

If somebody is out of step, it is the Christian's responsibility to bear with that person. At the same time, he is to make efforts to help the person understand that he is on the wrong track, and that he is hurting really only himself. In other words, in the true Church, membership unity is produced by each person voluntarily uniting himself to God and His standard in every category of life. God's unity, brethren, cannot be forced. A person cannot be strong-armed into loving God or submitting to the commandments. He has got to make effort to do it himself, and he does it because he loves God, and he loves Jesus Christ, and he loves the brethren.

Do you see what they are doing? They are letting these people do their own thing. That is pretty much what it amounts to. They have elevated **their** brand of unity, and **their** brand of fellowship above truth. That is idolatry at its worst. God demands conformity to Him and His ways.

Remember I Peter 3:15. "Sanctify Christ as Lord." That is our responsibility. "Sanctify **Christ** as Lord." Put the emphasis in the right place.

Let us continue with this by turning to Revelation 2 in the letters to the seven churches. What Christ says to the Ephesian church is interesting.

Revelation 2:2 I know your works, and your labor, and your patience, and how you cannot bear them which are evil: [Where were those evil people? They were right in the congregation.] and you have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars.

What is Christ doing there? He is praising the Ephesians because they did not put up with or endure the false teaching of those who infiltrated the true church.

One of the ways the Outcome-Based religious folks maintain unity is to accept anybody regardless of their beliefs, and permit them to hold those beliefs, making no effort to change them by teaching absolute truth. So regardless of what these people's concepts might be regarding the nature of God, it is okay with them. Regardless of the way they believe one is to get wherever or whenever the goal might be, or might happen according to them, is okay, because, after all, they are all worshipping the same God.

Did you ever wonder why Billy Graham was able to get up and give that dissertation, participate in, give a sermon in the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. after 9/11 with a Muslim and with a Catholic? There were five denominations represented there. There was a Jew there. Why was Billy Graham able to do that? He is one of them (Outcome-Based religion)! Here it is—America's pastor, but he is getting old, and guess to whom the baton is being passed? Mr. Outcome-Based religion himself!

I did not know that Billy Graham was one of them until just in the last couple months. I thought that he was a fundamentalist Evangelical. Evangelical he is, but fundamentalist he is not. He has been one of them for the last 30 or 40 years, operating without the name, but holding the same basic beliefs. I will give you proof as we move along. It will not be in this sermon, but I will give you some documentation from others.

Do you see what they are doing? Let us just bring it down to a nutshell. They are promoting a modern form of polytheism under the banner of Christianity, and unity, or community. Well, there is nothing new about this. It goes all the way back to Babylon, in Genesis 10 and 11, and the book of Judges, where "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." There is nothing new under the sun! Do you know why? The same one

who promoted what took place in Genesis 10 and 11 is still alive today. He is using the same basic pattern in the end time as he used then, because he is formulating the Beast and the False Prophet.

I let the cat out of the bag, because I believe that the Outcome-Based religion is the Israelitish version of what is going to be the church at the end time. It is attractive. It tolerates everything. It is global in its scope. We are seeing the seeds planted right here in our continent, but they were planted about fifty years ago at least.

I am going to tie this to a more historical event. Guess where the fountain of the Outcome-Based religions is? Pasadena, California—The Fuller Theological Seminary. I have been there. I used their library. It is less than a mile from Ambassador College.

Is not God interesting! He had **His** apostle working a mile away from what is eventually going to become one of the leading lights in this world religiously, and where globalism and the rise of the Beast takes place.

The leadership of the Purpose-Driven churches has dressed up this polytheism, and they have been doing it for over sixty years. They have presented their ideas in a very entertaining, well-organized, systematized and consumer-friendly atmosphere. But they have reinterpreted the purpose of the church and religion. They have brought forth nothing more than an attractive confusion with "Christian" window-dressing.

I am going to give a series of quotes here. The first one is from an article by Berit Kjos. She is a very intelligent lady who has a web site of her own. From everything I can see, she is fundamental in her beliefs, and a pretty trustworthy person. At any rate, she wrote this article titled "From Gnostic Roots to Occult Revival." In this article she is quoting a pastor, Brian D. McLaren. She describes him as a key figure in the Emerging Church (the Outcome-Based Religion). This McLaren is the author of a book with the catchy title, "A New Kind of Christian." You know where he is headed.

McLaren himself, though he is being quoted, in turn is actually quoting Alan Jones who is the author of a book. You buy a new book, and it has a cover on it, and in the flyleaf or in the forward there will be comments by some person commenting about the book's contents. The title of the book Alan Jones wrote is called "Reimagining Christianity." Guess what that book is about?

Anyway, Berit Kjos quotes McLaren saying, "It used to be that Christian institutions and systems of dogma sustained the spiritual life of Christians. Increasingly, spirituality itself is what sustains everything else."

He really said a mouthful there once you begin to get the whole picture. "Alan Jones is a pioneer in reimagining a Christian faith that emerges from authentic spirituality." Jones says in his book that "there is no objective authority." This is a *Christian* minister. In other words, there is no authoritative dogma from a God on high.

Now you put these two together, and what you have is a reimagined Christianity in which everybody sets his own dogma by means of his personal spirituality. This ties right into something that I said to you before (but we will dote on it a little later) and that is the Purpose-Driven churches **urge** you to "experience God." That is the term they use. Do you know how you do this? You come up with your own imagination about God from within yourself. According to them, that is authentic spirituality. It is not the spirituality that accrues to you as a result of your relationship with God, but actually something you produce yourself from within yourself. That is sheer demonism! That is why Berit Kjos put the title on this article—"From Gnostic Roots to Occult Revival."

I do not know whether these people understand it or not, but they are actually putting people in touch with demons. This is the heart and core of New Age religion; only the Outcome-Based religion is not a New Age religion in the normal sense. The Outcome-Based Religions are just beginning to touch on the occult. They are playing around the edges of it.

Brethren, do not be deceived! I do not care how attractive these things look, they are as deceptive as you can get, and yet they go under the banner of being Christian.

Matthew 7:24-27 Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that hears these sayings of mine and does them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

I want you to notice that at the very beginning of verse 24 this series of verses began with the word "Therefore." It lets us know that this is a summary conclusion, and in this case it happens to be the summary conclusion of the entire Sermon on the Mount. Here is the point that Jesus is making. It is three chapters long—chapter 5, chapter 6, and chapter 7.

Let us apply His conclusion to the New Paradigm churches—the Outcome-Based religion. They are not building their members' lives on the sayings of Jesus Christ. Any saying that disrupts their concept of unity is just thrown out. How can they be building their people's lives on the sayings of Jesus Christ? You see, Jesus Christ is just one of many that they use, including philosophers, psychologists, and business gurus. That outfit is really nothing more than an entertaining religion-oriented social do-gooder organization palming themselves off as the church of Jesus Christ.

I want you to notice that the man in Matthew 7 who failed did not fail because he labored not, but he failed because he failed to build on the proper foundation for life. I believe that the very largest number of people associated—maybe even some of the leadership, especially local leadership—are sincere and devoted in what they are doing. They are giving their time and energies honestly, but they cannot overcome the deception that Satan has effectively blinded them with. The shifting sand in this illustration here of Jesus is nothing more than human opinion—the opinion of philosophers, psychologists, and business gurus.

If you should choose to read any of their publications, you will find that besides their strong appeal to human nature, there are two elements that are significant to fully consider. These are broad. The one element is what they say. The second element is what they do *not* say.

What they say, in fact what they emphasize, is terminology familiar and appealing to a person with a measure of Christian understanding—people who may even have an academic, business background, or even a political background. They emphasize principles like loyalty, leadership, and purity of life, unity, community, peace, tolerance, goals, overcoming, and success—just like we do. Right?

What is not said, though, is that even though they refer to Christian principles and even quote a scripture here and there that fits their purpose, they do not emphasize the development of a relationship with God through submission. Their ultimate source of authority is absolutely not God, and not His absolutes, because those absolutes convict them and would destroy their purpose.

Their ultimate purpose is not salvation through Jesus Christ. Their ultimate purpose is to become a large and powerful quasi-religious organization doing good works that leads to establishing their vision of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Purpose-Driven churches' leadership does not believe God's purposes are stated in God's Word, and I will prove that to you later.

I believe that they are going to continue to experience phenomenal growth. They have leaked the borders of the United States, and they are beginning to impact strongly in Canada, in Australia, and England—all lands where there are significant numbers of Israelitish people.

Where do I believe this is all headed, and what does it portend for the future, and why should we be concerned that we do not get caught up in its attractive human-nature web?

Brethren, the Purpose-Driven churches are a religious phenomenon that we are living through. It took a while for the concept to take hold, but now they are well entrenched in American life, and their influence is rapidly expanding. In the past few years the Internet has come alive with warnings from fundamentalists religions. Their writers are informing and warning their membership to take care. The Church of God is going to be considered a fundamentalist religion by the Purpose-Driven churches' leadership. I am going to give you the names of some of the writers who have been the source of the information I have been giving.

The major one is a man by the name of Mac Dominick. He is the author of a book titled "The Purpose-Driven Church." However, there have been many others among them: Berit Kjos, Ingrid Schluter, Gary Gilley, and Bob DeWaay. Gary Gilley is pastor of a fundamentalist church in Illinois, and the title of his book is "This Little Church Went To Market." That is kind of interesting. Bob DeWaay is pastor of a fundamentalist church in Minnesota. He is the author of a book called "Redefining Christianity: Understanding The Purpose-Driven Church Movement."

To say that they are alarmed is putting it mildly. George Barna polled American religion in a survey published in May 2005. That survey sought to establish the books most read by American church pastors during the past three years Barna found that the clear number one choice of church pastors all the way across the spectrum of what we might call Christianity was "The Purpose-Driven Life" by Rick Warren.

Second place went to "The First Purpose-Driven Church," also by Rick Warren. Rick Warren is looked to as the driving force of the Purpose-Driven church movement and the heir-apparent to Billy Graham in terms of Christian evangelism.

Now what does Rick Warren believe about people like you? Listen to this quote from Ingrid Schluter from an article she wrote titled *The Gospel According To Rick Warren*. She got her source from the Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper, January 8, 2006. "Warren predicts that fundamentalism of all variety will be one of the big enemies of the Twenty-

Purpose-Driven Churches (Part 4) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

first Century. Muslim fundamentalism, Christian fundamentalism, Jewish fundamentalism, secular fundamentalism are all motivated by 'fear'—fear of each other."

Did you catch the significance of what he said? Well, Ingrid Schluter certainly did. Despite the fact that Dr. Warren knows Christian fundamentalism is solidly based in the Bible—the same Bible he uses to his advantage where he sees that its word fits his program—Christian fundamentalists are already his enemy. Can you see the drift of things? The day is going to come when they kill you, thinking they are doing God a service. The times we are living in are building up. That was not a slip-of-the-tongue, off-the-cuff remark by him.

The New Paradigm church leaders have so reinterpreted Christianity that it is nothing more than a faint shadow of the reality. They have retained the name association, because it is advantageous to their purpose, but have rejected most of the Bible, as we will see as we move along.