

**Dan Southerland, with Church Transitions Inc. led a workshop for
pastors at Rick Warren's Saddleback Church**

**"Fighting for the Faith"
By Chris Rosenbrough**

The entire message was awash in a false premise (*that all church growth is good*) so all you need to do is implement Church Transitions, Inc.'s multistep "good works" program then God has to reward you with a bigger church, why - because you earned it. This only comes to show that the object of these pastors hearts is not loyalty or fidelity to Christ and The Faith once and for all delivered to the Early Church, but to the idol that they worship "church growth" measured not in members with deepening faith or mature disciples or even measured by the Word of God but measured by those pastors personal success in accumulating numerical growth (butts in seats) and big budgets (tithes checks in the Church's bank acct).

These are the steps to take your church (notice not Jesus' Church) from "boring to blessed:" the message is stop shepherding the Sheep like the Bible says, instead herd goats because goat herding always equals bigger attendance, more tithes (or dividends for you CEO pastor-types) and more respect in the community

Step 1 – Cell Churches – to grow your church large you have to cater to peoples felt need for a small group community. So *Oxymoronicly* to get a big church you have to get members to "feel" like it's a small church. My question is, Why not just attend a small church?

Step 2 – Contemporary Music – is a must! Shallow music, with no doctrinal depth, always equals shallow worship, and eventually raises up shallow worshippers. Why is contemporary music a must - because goats like cool music.

Step 3 – Seeker Driven (*AKA Being Lost Focused*) – Becoming sinner focused is more important that if you're teaching false or incorrect doctrine. God, apparently, just wants to see if your trying to reach your community, He doesn't care with what are you tempting them into your Church (*entertainment, shtick, sex, secular man-focused worship,*

whatever it takes). According to Dan, God loves the lost even more than those believers that are already in your church; this false doctrine flows right into step 4.

Step 4 – Church is not about you or me – Dan is here referring to members (*or the Sheep*). Church is about the goats (*non-members, the outsiders*) so the secular music, the shallowness of preaching, the stage shows, the comedy routine (*oops, I meant sermon*) are always only focused not on what your Sheep need (*repentance and the forgiveness of sins*) but on what the goats want. What can your church do to draw and entertain Satan’s children? This “pastor,” and I can barely use that term loosely enough to include, Dan Southerland, actually apologized to a church member when they came to him with a concern that he, as the goat herder, must have somehow given them the impression that the church was for them; its not, its for the goats (the lost). Dan says that a Purpose-driven, Seeker-sensitive church does not “net fish” (*like in the NT*) but “bait fishes” because CEO –type pastors know what sinners want and “lure” them in with it. This is why the American church whores itself with sex sermons, movie sermons, worldly music, give-a-ways, raffles, lotteries, fun, excitement, and entertainment at the cost of actually acting like a church as described in Scripture (*see Acts and the Pastoral epistles*). So what does Dan suggest when the regenerate members dare to suggest that the church that they are a part of act like a church? Tell them, that “We choose Purpose over Preference” and acting like a church is apparently only your preference. Christians however do not fish with lures (*or gimmicks*) but with the net of the Gospel that draws in God’s Elect, Chosen, and Called because the Church or Ekklesia - is a group of “the called out ones” (*those whom God has called out of the World to be His own*).

Step 5 – Following the Movements of God – according to Dan previous movements of God were focused on arguing doctrines of Scripture and following the Bible (*that describes all 2000 yrs. of past Christianity, Dan*). Now the movement of God is obviously in the seeker mode of churches because there are so many large Seeker-Driven churches and a big church means a godly church right? That’s a false premise, Dan. Unfortunately this faulty premise means that your life’s work of teaching other churches to become non-churches means you’re in direct opposition to Jesus Christ and the proclamation of Salvation through

Grace alone – by Faith alone – on account of Christ’s atoning work alone. But according to Dan once you get into line with what God is doing (*or trying to do*) in the World then – Oh Man – then God can really move in your church.

Dan says that even Billy Graham said that the Purpose-driven church movement is the biggest movement of God in this generation. (Didn’t say he agreed with it, though.)

Step 6 – Defining your Vision – this can be the hardest part of the whole transition of your church into a non-church. Dan recommends not the Bible for this transition, but Henry Blackaby’s books, which he studies every year. You’ve got to see what God is doing (*or what’s hot today*) then get on board. So this isn’t optional, God will not submit to your style so you have to submit to what He is doing in the world. **So you have to** get on board with the Purpose-Driven, Seeker-Sensitive Vision-casting CEO-instead of pastor model for your church or you’re not getting on board with what God is doing. This is where God is today. This is what He’s doing. Not according to Scripture, of course, but according to Dan.

Step 7 – God laid this on Dan’s heart – Dan inserts this message here because in Purpose-Driven speak if you don’t want anyone to question your raping and pillaging of the Orthodox, historic Christian faith or the Bible’s model for the Church, then all you have to do is say, “Well you can’t question me or my motives. Why, because it was God who laid this passion for church deconstruction (*or destruction*) that I’m doing on my heart.” Just read or listen to Brian McLaren, he does the exact same thing. Then Dan quotes 1 Corinthians 2:9 – “But, as it is written, What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” and misuses it to say, See, God wants you to have a Mega-church **so big** no eye has seen this great gift God wants to give you – church growth.

And here comes the “good works;” (*it reminds me of the old Pelagian heresy-Google it!*) because God wants to do this awesome thing for you but you’ve got to get ready first (*how - by implementing Church Transitions, Inc.’s methods*). You have got to jump through hoops to show God that you’re ready; that you’re really serious.

Prepare for the Vision – so, what is the vision, well it's a picture of what God wants to do (*in or through you*). And how do you invent this Vision that you will later pretend that God has given you? First, you have to find out what the goats (*the un-churched*) in your community want: if they want better sex-lives (and really who doesn't) then you need to craft some sex sermons (*or just buy them from Ed Young, Jr.*), if they want a night out on the town, then offer a church-run parents night out daycare service, if they want to continue in their sins then eventually burn in Hell for all of eternity, then just don't preach the Law or the Gospel or repentance or the forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name to them. See it's easy.

According to Dan - Now if you only want 100 people in your church from here to Eternity then keep holding hands with the 100 "whiners" in your church right now – and that'll do it. And that's fine, but don't do it then claim you're building a church for God. You have to use growing churches as models for your church, and you have to get your theology (*whatever you want that to be*) from the Bible, but you have to get your methodology from bigger churches.

Dan here quotes Matthew 7:20 (*which ironically is about false teachers, Dan*) "Thus you will recognize them by their fruits." And again he rapes Scripture to assert that you'll know if God is with you, in the context of his message, if you have a big church. And you'll recognize other God-is-with-them churches to emulate if they too are big. He says remember Jesus didn't say, You'll know them by their theology. Why, does he stress this? All false teachers reject Biblical doctrine, because its Biblical doctrine that God uses to point out heretics and false teachers. And it's the dawning realization that someone is a false teacher that God uses to remove His Elect from their blasphemous control.

What else do you need to do to get God to grow you're church? Well you've got to fast – and fasting doesn't just mean don't eat, it means extra prayer on top of your regular amount of prayer. You have to get yourself ready for God's vision- then just wait for God to show up and grant you the Vision.

Rate yourself he says, from 1 to 100 for the level of prayer your doing for your church's future (*go ahead and write it down*) and then put a

percentage at the end of it. And that's it, that's the max percentage of increase to your church that God will ever give you. If you pray at a 25% level **then God can only** give you the 25% increase not the full 100% he wants to give you. Pray at a 50% level and then only 50% of what God wants to do in your church can be done.

Then he tells a story of a tour in heaven with St Peter with rooms stuffed full of gifts and presents. Is this my heavenly reward – the man asks? No – says Peter – its all the gifts God wanted to give you but you never asked for them. (*This reminds me of the old Semi-Pelagian Heresy-Google it, if you don't know!*)

Remember the Vision principles. The Vision only comes to those who first gather goat-information, prepares for the Vision (*by implementing Church Transition, Inc.'s methods*), fasts, prays, then waits on God for the Vision, but if you fast or pray too little then God **can** only give you little growth. Actual Christians instead of buying Church strategies from Dan Southerland & Church Transition, Inc. open their Bibles (for free!) read the Acts of the Early Church and the Pastoral Epistles then try their best to be faithful (remember fidelity?) to what God has already told Christians to do not buying into what Dan says he's in-Visioned (probably imagined following substandard Mexican food).