

## SADDLEBACK MEGA-CHURCH OF RICK WARREN USING HERETIC ROB BELL'S TEACHINGS

By Rev. Ken Silva, Southern Baptist pastor-teacher on May 22, 2011



*Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ([1 Corinthians 5:6](#))*

### **Today Evangelicalism Is Full Of Leaven**

The leading online apologetics and discernment work [Apprising Ministries](#) has pointed out that a part of our labor in the Lord is the documenting of the painfully obvious [New Downgrade](#) within mainstream evangelicalism; obvious at least for those blessed by God with eyes that see.

I've also told you before that the root of growing apostasy roughly begins with the charismatic revival circa 1960 as it later spreads through the Jesus People/Movement in the early 1970's and out into various mainline denominations as well as into what became the *Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Mission*.<sup>[1]</sup> You need to realize that this is the spiritual cesspool from which the new liberalism of the seeker-friendly/sinner-sensitive methodology of letting culture define the church visible would spring.

As Dr. John MacArthur has said:

I've said this many times: I can listen to a guy preach—put anybody in front of me—and I'll tell you what his view of Scripture is by what he says. If he doesn't preach out of the Bible, I know what his view of Scripture is, I don't care what he says. I don't care if he wants to die telling me he's a believer in inerrancy, if he gets up and does not preach the Word of God, that's his view of Scripture leaking all over the place. Look, every preacher preaches for impact, for effect, for result. You're up there saying what you think is going to get you the best result.

If you think it's foolishness and fun n' games and song n' dance and sermonettes for Christianettes—if you think it's that kind of stuff—that's what you're going to do; ... It comes down to this loss of preaching. And I'll tell you, how do you know it's the new liberalism? Because you can't stop a seeker-friendly movement, because it's going to be redefined, it's going to be redefined, it's going to be redefined...

You know, Schuller is the architect of this. Robert Schuller is the absolute father. The grandfather of the movement, who was a little bit below the radar, was Norman Vincent Peale. Norman Vincent Peale is a classic liberal. The primary impact that Norman Vincent Peale has had on the world is through his leading disciple, [Robert Schuller](#), who said to me, "I can sign the confession of my denomination and makes the words mean anything I want them to mean." Well, that's classic neo-orthodoxy—or liberalism (whichever).

So, you've got Norman Vincent Peale, who creates this kind of liberal, social gospel; his number one disciple, positive-thinker Robert Schuller; Robert Schuller develops this concept of the church many years ago, where he goes into Orange County and he goes door-to-door, passes out cards, and tells people to write down what they want a church to be, and then he gives them what they ask for. He said in a speech at N.R.B. many years ago, "If you want to know how to build a church, ask the community, and give them what they want." His most famous disciple trained into that model is Bill Hybels, and the second is [Rick Warren](#). Rick Warren says, himself, that when he left seminary, he drove right to the Crystal Cathedral and was mentored there.

So, there's a flow going on here. And where is it going? It's going toward the [Emerging Church](#). That's why you can have all those people—Rick Warren and [Brian McLaren](#)—way out on the edge of the [Emergent Church](#), you can have all those people at the same conference in San Diego all speaking, and, in between, sessions on Yoga. If you just look at the roots of something—and look where it's going: if you let the culture define the church, there's no way to catch up.

So, now you go to Schuller's church, you wouldn't find anybody whose hair wasn't gray, because they had their little niche for that little cultural group, and they go to the grave with them. And the same is going to happen with the others and the others and the others... It's not transcendent. It's not trans-cultural. It's not even beyond their tiny little chronological zone. And that's the problem with it, because if it's culturally defined, it is its own worst enemy; it's planned obsolescence.[2]

There's the rotten root; and as this was spreading its spiritual poison into the bloodline of the church visible for decades, by 2005 mainstream evangelicalism would finally become so spiritually spineless that it began to embrace the warped and toxic teachings of EC leaders e.g. like the [Emerging Church](#) rock star pastor [Rob Bell](#). As I've brought to your attention before, sadly, in the very heart of the visible church we've seen this spiritual cancer metastasize throughout its body spreading the awful influence of sinfully ecumenical neo-liberal cult of the [Emergent Church](#) aka the [Emerging Church](#) until it's now mortally wounded and coming under God's judgment (cf. [1 Peter 4:17](#)).

Keep in mind that the EC has now been upgraded to the Emerging Church 2.0—with its newer, more clearly delineated, postmodern [Progressive Christian](#) theology, which these rebels against the final authority of the Word of God will often refer to under their circus “big tent” as [Emergence Christianity](#). So you should know by now that the first line of attack upon the heart of the church visible by such as these who will not adhere to God's authoritative Word in the Bible was to batter down sola Scriptura, the key pillar of proper Christian spirituality. It's also beyond question that Rob Bell was on the front lines of this heresy.

From the Southern Baptist flagship [Saddleback Church](#), captained by Purpose Driven Pope [Rick Warren](#), I will now enter into evidence the following from its own website. As I see it this evidence from primary sources goes a long way toward proving beyond a reasonable doubt that what John MacArthur just said above is true, despite what Dr. John Piper may try and have us believe. Consider the following from Kay Warren concerning the definite influence of Robert Schuller upon her husband Rick Warren from the *Christianity Astray* article [A Regular Purpose-Driven Guy](#):

During his last year in seminary, he and Kay drove west to visit **Robert Schuller's Institute for Church Growth**. "We had a very stony ride out to the conference," she says, because such nontraditional ministry scared her to death. Schuller, though, won them over.

**"He had a profound influence on Rick,"** Kay says. "We were captivated by his positive appeal to nonbelievers. I never looked back." ([Online source](#), emphasis mine)

Now we see "flow going on here" at Saddleback Church, one of the most influential congregations in the [Southern Baptist Convention](#), to "the Emerging Church" in the person of Rob Bell. As a matter of fact, two years ago in [Saddleback Church Pastors Using Rob Bell Teachings](#) I told you they'd already made that fateful decision. Not really all that surprising considering this August 2009 tweet from Rick Warren to Rob Bell:

*@RickWarren: "thetoomaguy Hey Rob, Just wanted to encourage you to ignore critics. If you werent impacting & making a difference, theyd ignore you. rick"[3]*

### **Why Would A Pastor Want To Turn His Flock Toward Those Who Preach A Different Gospel?**

However, now it grows even more blatant; under [Women's Home Small Group Resources](#) at Saddleback Bell's Nooma DVDs are recommended:

## WOMEN'S HOME SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

A variety of published DVD / VHS home group studies are available to Home Group Hosts and can be checked out through Women @ Saddleback's office by emailing [jennifer@saddleback.com](mailto:jennifer@saddleback.com).

The actual participants' books can be purchased at the Pavilion located on the patio outside the Worship Center after the weekend services or through Saddleback's Bookstore located at the Ministry Office, Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**Rob Bell**  
Nooma Studies  
001-022 Available

([Online source](#))

As far as the mythology of Rob Bell (cf. [2 Timothy 4:3-4](#)) in these Nooma DVDs I point you to the following by Greg Gilbert, who is “director of research for the president of [The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary](#) and an elder at *Third Avenue Baptist Church* in Louisville, Kentucky.” Gilbert is also author of the concise, but very helpful, book [What Is The Gospel?](#), which I have, and am pleased to recommend. This section below as it concerns the “moralism,” or even ‘Pelagianism’ of Rob Bell comes from the first part of Gilbert’s series [The Scoop’a on NOOMA](#) in the ejournal of [9 Marks](#):

### WHAT’S MISSING; WHAT’S NEEDED

I have said in several places on this site that there is much about the Emergent theological storyline that I find compelling. Who wouldn’t be excited by the idea of God’s people—broken, sinful people accepted by him just as they are—living and working to diffuse God’s grace and love throughout the whole of society? So far as it goes, that’s a great and biblical vision, and there’s a reason it resonates with people. But, in my opinion, where the Emergent church and these videos go wrong is in telling the world that *that . . . is . . .* the gospel.

It’s not. Good as that storyline might be, it is finally too small and too colorless. For God to lovingly accept us as we are no matter how ashamed we might be of ourselves is nice and all, but it’s a pretty pale gray compared to the Bible’s story of a just and loving God sending his

Son to take the punishment of a rebellious people so they can live with and for him forever.

If you want to engage a “new generation” looking for authenticity, honest answers, and a willingness to look unflinchingly at human sin and suffering, that’s the gospel that will do it. Unfortunately, that’s also the gospel that these NOOMA videos, at least so far, seem unwilling to talk about. ([Online source](#))

Really; you mean Saddleback and Rick Warren don’t have any problems exposing their women to these DVDs by Bell when:

the gospel presented in NOOMA misleads lost people about their relationship with God. The Bible could not be clearer that the consequence of sin and rebellion against God is that we are separated from him, our relationship with him is severed, and we are brought under his judgment and condemnation. “Your sins have made a separation between you and your God,” Isaiah says ([Is. 59:2](#)). And Paul writes in Romans 1 that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

These facts—that sin separates human beings from God, and that God judges sin—constitute one of the most important themes in the entire Bible. It explains why everything else was necessary—the sacrifices, the priests, the prophets, and especially Jesus’ death on the cross. It’s why Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” ([Matt. 27:46](#)). He was separated from God so that his redeemed people would not be.

Bell doesn’t say any of that in the NOOMA videos. In fact, he seems to tell lost people exactly the opposite—that they are already in relationship with God and even forgiven of sin, and that the only problem is that they just don’t realize it. ([Online source](#))

Well, now we know that this is exactly what Rob Bell has been teaching all along since he came clean in his latest book *Love Wins*. Look carefully at the following by Kevin DeYoung from his [God Is Still Holy and What You Learned in Sunday School Is Still True: A Review of “Love Wins”](#) where he shares:

I really must say something about the two most grievous errors in the book: Bell's view of the cross and his view of God. According to Bell, salvation is realizing you're already saved. We are all forgiven. We are all loved, equally and fully by God who has made peace with everyone. That work is done. Now we are invited to believe that story and live in it (172-73).

Bell is not saying what you think he might be saying. He's not suggesting faith is the instrumental cause used by the Spirit to join us to Christ so we can share in all his benefits. That would be evangelical theology. Bell is saying God has already forgiven us whether we ask for it or not, whether we repent and believe or not, whether we are born again or not. "Forgiveness is unilateral. God isn't waiting for us to get it together, to clean up, shape up, get up—God has already done it" (189)...

Bell categorically rejects any notion of penal substitution. It simply does not work in his system or with his view of God. "Let's be very clear, then," Bell states, "we do not need to be rescued from God. God is the one who rescues us from death, sin, and destruction. God is the rescuer" (182). I see no place in Bell's theology for Christ the curse-bearer ([Gal. 3:13](#)), or Christ wounded for our transgressions and crushed by God for our iniquities ([Isa. 53:5, 10](#)), no place for the Son of Man who gave his life as a ransom for many ([Mark 10:45](#)), no place for the Savior who was made sin for us ([2 Cor. 5:21](#)), no place for the sorrowful suffering Servant who drank the bitter cup of God's wrath for our sake ([Mark 14:36](#)). ([Online source](#))

Or how about the below from [Bell's Inferno](#) by John MacArthur where he informs us that:

Bell's notion of *sin* seems to be that its main evil consists in the hurt it causes to the sinner rather than the offense it causes to a righteous and almighty God. His concept of "*justice*" makes the punishment of sin wholly optional. His idea of *mercy* falsely holds forth a false promise of automatic leniency and a second chance after death to people already inclined to take divine clemency for granted anyway.

Rob Bell's god is clearly no one to be feared. That all stands in direct and deliberate contradiction to everything Jesus ever taught about sin, righteousness, and judgment.

By thus pitting his own ideas against Jesus' message, Bell makes it inescapably clear that he "advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ" (cf. [1 Timothy 6:3](#)). He is wrong—seriously wrong—*heretically* wrong—to question the justice of God and to hold out false hope to unbelievers. He is, as we have seen from the start of this series, a textbook example of the false teacher who secretly introduces destructive heresies ([2 Peter 2:1](#)).

That *must* be said plainly and emphatically. ([Online source](#))

Yet despite all of the above Rick Warren and his mega Saddleback Church still hand over their young and vulnerable sheep to this false prophet. In the [Young Adult](#) section of Saddleback's website we find highly recommended:

## RESOURCES: YOUNG ADULT



### VELVET ELVIS: REPAINTING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH\* BY ROB BELL

We know there's something more. We sense it, we feel it, we know it. And we want it. We want an authentic spirituality. We have to test everything. I thank God for anybody anywhere who is pointing people to the mysteries of God. But those people would all tell you to think long and hard about what they are saying and doing and creating. Test it. Probe it. Do that to this book. Don't swallow it uncritically. Think about it. Wrestle with it. Just because I'm a Christian and I'm trying to articulate a Christian worldview doesn't mean I've got it nailed. I'm contributing to the discussion. God has spoken, and the rest is commentary, right?

ISBN: 0310273080  
2006 Zondervan  
208 pages

([Online source](#))

In closing this, for now, remember how I told you that Rob Bell was on the front lines of the Emerging Church attack upon the final authority of the Word of God; read it for yourself from the very book recommended so highly by Rick Warren's Saddleback Church above:

I was in an intense meeting with our church leaders in which we were discussing several passages in the Bible. One of the leaders was sharing her journey in trying to understand what the Bible teaches about the issue at hand and she said something like this: "I've spent a great deal of time recently studying this issue. I've read what the people on the one side of the issue say, and I've read what the people on the other side say.



I've read the scholars and the theologians and all sorts of others on this subject. But then, in the end, **I decided to get back to the Bible and just take it for what it really says."**

Now please understand that this way of thinking is prevalent in a lot of Christian churches,...but **this view of the Bible is warped and toxic, to say the least...** The assumption is that there is a way to read the Bible that is agenda—and perspective—free...This perspective is claiming that **a person can simply read the Bible and do what it says—** unaffected by any outside influences... When you hear people say they are just going to tell you what the Bible means, it is not true. They are telling you what they think it means...[4]

This is part of **the problem with** continually insisting that one of the absolutes of the Christian faith must be a belief that **"Scripture alone"** is our guide. It sounds nice **but it is not true...** When people say that all we need is the Bible, **it is simply not true.**[5]

Such is the sad and deplorable state of much of the mainstream of evangelicalism. So to show you the difference, I now leave you with the words of a man actually sent by God. This is J.C. Ryle from his [Standing On The Rock](#):

On one point of vast importance in the present day, the reader will see that I hold very decided opinions. That point is inspiration. I feel no hesitation in avowing that I believe in the plenary inspiration of every word of the original text of Holy Scripture. I hold not only that the Bible contains the Word of God, but that every jot of it was written, or brought together, by Divine inspiration, and is the Word of God...

I am content to remember that all inspiration is a miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost, and, like every operation of the Holy Ghost, must needs be mysterious. It is an operation of which not forty men in the world have been made the subjects, and the manner of which not one of the forty has described. It stands to reason that the whole question of inspiration, like everything else supernatural, must necessarily contain much that is mysterious, and much that we cannot explain.

– But the difficulties of the “plenary verbal” theory appear to me mere trifles, compared with those which surround the counter theory of

“partial inspiration” ... Give me the plenary, verbal theory of biblical inspiration with all its difficulties, rather than the doubt. I accept the difficulties and humbly wait for their solution. But while I wait, I am standing on a rock... ([Online source](#))

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Endnotes:

[1] <http://tinyurl.com/2do9obh>, accessed 5/22/11.

[2] [John MacArthur: Seeker-Friendly Movement Is The New Liberalism](#).

[3] <http://tiny.cc/xtipp>, accessed 5/22/11.

[4] Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005], 053, 054, emphasis mine.

[5] *Ibid.*, 067, 068, emphasis mine.