

THE P.E.A.C.E. PLAN:

Are You Ready for Purpose-Driven Mission?

Darrell Dorr

Even if you wanted to, it would be hard to ignore Rick Warren and the Purpose-Driven movement he has nurtured. Building on the earlier success of *The Purpose-Driven Church*, Warren's *Purpose-Driven Life* has sold more than 20 million copies in the U.S. alone – in a little more than two years – and is now the best-selling hardback book (other than the Bible) in American history. TIME magazine has named Warren not only one of America's 25 most influential evangelicals but also one of the 15 “people who mattered most” in 2004.

Founded by Warren in 1980, Saddleback Church of Lake Forest, California has grown to 20,000 members and has become the “mother ship” for the Purpose-Driven Movement begun in 1985. Each Monday Warren e-mails his “Toolbox” newsletter to 136,000 subscribing ministers.

Purpose-Driven is seeking to progressively move the Church from self-centeredness to unselfishness.

But Purpose-Driven is more than an American phenomenon. *The Purpose-Driven Life* has been translated into 28 other languages and is licensed in 56. Warren

says that he has trained 400,000 pastors worldwide and that the Purpose-Driven church model has been employed in at least 122 countries.

And now this worldwide movement is preparing to kick into a new gear with the P.E.A.C.E. Plan, an acrostic-laden program for Purpose-Driven Mission. After two years of preparation and pilot experiments in 47 countries, P.E.A.C.E. is scheduled for an official launch at Saddleback Church in October 2005, with others in the movement expected to follow.

Building on the sequence in Acts 1:8, Warren explains that



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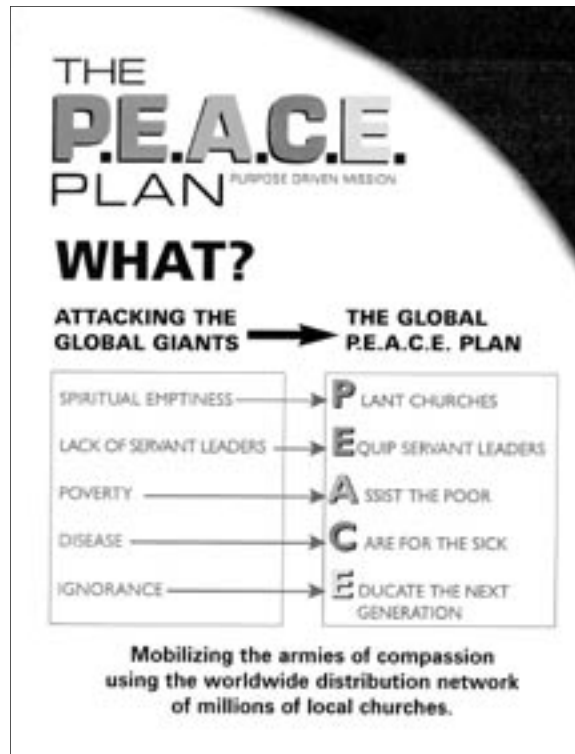


Figure 1

Purpose-Driven is seeking to progressively move the Church from self-centeredness to unselfishness. If *The Purpose-Driven Life* retools your life in “Jerusalem”, and *The Purpose-Driven Church* immerses you in community within your “Judea and Samaria,” then P.E.A.C.E. aims to launch church-based, short-term small groups to the “utmost parts” as catalysts for long-term, cross-cultural mission. Ready or not, Purpose-Driven Mission is coming soon to a neighborhood near you.

But what is it? A sneak preview can be found on the Saddleback Website (saddlebackfamily.com/peace). *Mission Frontiers* has obtained further details from a variety of pre-launch documents, correspondence with program planners, and participation in a February 2005 briefing given to selected Purpose-Driven pastors invited to Irvine, California.



The picture that emerges is that of a plan quickly looping through successive iterations. “We’re making this up as we go along,” observes Warren, yet Southern California casualness is here accompanied by careful engineering and shrewd marketing. Warren holds graduate degrees in missions from two seminaries, and he has assembled a team of 25 working full-time on P.E.A.C.E., including experienced leaders from Campus Crusade for Christ, the JESUS Film Project, and the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. This team, coordinated by Mike Constantz, is actively soliciting feedback and tinkering further before the October launch.

What Is Clear

Those who care about frontier mission can find much to celebrate in the P.E.A.C.E. Plan. First, Warren and his team give prominence to unreached peoples. Warren proclaims himself a long-time fan of Ralph Winter and the U.S. Center for World Mission, and his team is leaning heavily on the International Mission Board’s tally of “unengaged” peoples awaiting pioneer efforts.

Second, Warren is eager to “turn an audience into an army,” to actively mobilize the “worldwide distribution network of millions of local churches” for mission. He describes Saddleback and Purpose-Driven as small group factories building distribution centers for the “next Reformation” characterized by energized behavior as well as belief. “Judge a church not by its seating capacity but by its sending capacity” is a sermon likely to evoke Amens from many corners.

Constantz elaborates that P.E.A.C.E. involves more than short-term mission efforts from one country to another and that local church members in their own country are key to the plan. He adds, “Local church members (‘every member on mission’) need to be mobilized to help fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment right where they live as well as reaching out to the unreached peoples with unchurched areas within their own countries.”

Third, P.E.A.C.E. is holistic, attempting to attack the “five global giants” of spiritual emptiness, lack of servant leaders, poverty, disease, and ignorance. The fivefold remedy weaves frontier mission into a larger tapestry: **P**lanting churches, **E**quipping servant leaders, **A**ssisting the poor, **C**aring for the sick, and **E**ducating the next generation. (See figure 1.) Warren likens P.E.A.C.E. to a common computer “operating system” that provides a base for a wide variety of “application programs”, such as denominational variations. Assisted by mission agencies,

P.E.A.C.E. planners are developing various forms of “just-in-time training”, including “kits” or “boxes” anticipated for P.E.A.C.E. small groups to use once they’re on-site among the giants: Clinic in a Box,

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“We’re Open to Feedback”

Rick Warren

I’m humbled that *Mission Frontiers* would even pay attention to our evolving P.E.A.C.E. strategy since USCWM staff – and Ralph Winter especially – have been heroes to me for 30 years, since I was ministering in Japan. I’ve probably read every issue, and it’s my favorite missions magazine. Identifying the five “Global Giants” was not my invention but the conclusion after talking to missionaries and church leaders everywhere we’ve taught the Purpose-Driven Church training.

My two requests are:

1. Realize we are humble learners and are open to every feedback and comment we can get from practitioners in particular. Our staff come from a dozen of the largest agencies with a combined missions experience of hundreds of years, but we never stop learning. That’s a key value for us.
2. Realize that this report on the P.E.A.C.E. Plan may be a bit premature. We’re only 18 months into our 3-year test pilot program, and we haven’t even “gone public” with it yet. But we did want mission professionals to know in advance so we could solicit their expertise.

God, in his sovereignty, decided to give *The Purpose-Driven Church* and *The Purpose-Driven Life* a worldwide audience, so we intend to use that platform for missions. For the global glory of God!



Figure 2

Church in a Box, Leadership Training in a Box, Business in a Box.

Fourth, the P.E.A.C.E. team acknowledges that they're on a learning curve and welcome counsel from a wide variety of sources. Warren acknowledges that "there's a downside to every strategy" and proclaims that "we don't have ego in this process." (See sidebar, "We're Open to Feedback.")

What Is Not So Clear

The Saddleback Website heralds P.E.A.C.E. as a plan "that re-establishes the church as the primary means God uses to fulfill the Great Commission to all people groups in every country of the world." At the February 2005 briefing Warren heralded the 21st century as the century of the local church and proclaimed, "It's time for the church to be the church."

However, as documented by Ralph Winter and others, both local congregations and apostolic mission

Is There a Better Way?

Len Bartlotti, Ph.D.

One of the characteristics of a Purpose-Driven church is evaluating by purpose: "Is there a better way to fulfill each purpose?" That is my approach and the primary question raised here: *Is there a better way to fulfill the purpose of the proposed Peace Plan?*

I write from the perspective of a former pastor, and one who has been engaged in mission for close to thirty years as a mobilizer, lecturer, researcher, strategist and consultant (my current role), in

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addition to 14 years of church-planting and relief work among one of the largest Muslim unreached people groups in the world. I do not claim that these experiences give me omniscience or prescience! But they do help me keep a variety of perspectives and considerations in view as I evaluate this exciting proposal.

A close reading of the plan (first relayed to me after a June 2004 briefing) suggests two core objectives, first, the *mobilization* of every Purpose-Driven

local church, small group and church member to be "on mission"; and second, the *overcoming* of the five "Global Giants" (Spiritual Blindness, Lack of Servant Leaders, Poverty, Disease, and Ignorance). The former—*mass mobilization of local churches*—is presumed to be the *preferred* if not *only means* to achieve the latter—overcoming the Giants. To evaluate the plan properly, it may be helpful to separate these two purposes.

Mission leaders and missionaries I have talked to express concerns about the Peace Plan that seem to center around 1) the *assumptions* about field strategy—how (and which) "Global Giants" can and should be overcome; and 2) the *relationship* between local churches/small groups and other realities "out there" on the "field"—the "giants" and the varieties of existing ministries and churches, and multiplied thousands of complex national, politico-economic and ethno-linguistic contexts.

At least three things are open to discussion, if not debate:

- a) The *identification and prioritization* of the "giants" (i.e., why the so-called giant of "Lack of Servant



Develop New
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Partnership

structures are biblical, legitimate, and necessary expressions of the “Church.” Winter’s “Two Structures of God’s Redemptive Mission” (posted to the *MF* Website with this issue) describes how in the past 2000 years apostolic mission structures (beyond the local church) have formed the cutting edge of cross-cultural outreach. That’s not likely to change in the 21st century.

On the one hand, Warren declares, “I believe in full-time missionaries,” and P.E.A.C.E. literature calls for agencies with expertise and resources to become P.E.A.C.E. Partners. (See figure 2.) Yet when asked about concerns mission agencies might have about P.E.A.C.E., Warren says, “They’re just not enough; we need both, but we can’t put new wine in old wineskins.” Observers may well ask if the “new wine” of Purpose-Driven small groups must indeed remain separate from wineskins created by others. (See sidebar, “Is There a Better Way?”)

Stay Tuned!

Despite these cautions, observers of the P.E.A.C.E. Plan can be encouraged that it is still a work in progress and that its designers are seeking to listen to others. At this stage elasticity may be queen of the virtues. Leaders at the U.S. Center for World Mission, among others, have met with Warren and other P.E.A.C.E. leaders and have been invited to participate in ongoing dialogue. Stay tuned for further reports as P.E.A.C.E. evolves further. Churches and mission agencies alike will want to follow this story closely.

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Meanwhile, *Mission Frontiers* readers can make their voices heard via letters to the editor (mission.frontiers@uscwm.org) and by directing feedback to P.E.A.C.E. planners at mikec@saddleback.net. 🌐

purpose driven

Leaders”, and not others, e.g. “Gender Bias and Oppression” or “Environmental Degradation” or “Political Oppression [The Absence of Freedom aka Democracy]”?);

- b) The *conceptualization and implementation* of effective *field strategies, methods and means* to overcome these (and/or other) giants;
- c) The *role of local churches*—how best to mobilize and equip local churches for effective partnership in global missions at “the ends of the earth” and in the darkest places of human need.

What is the point—don’t slay giants? God forbid! Should churches hold back out of fear of making mistakes? No, not at all! Nevertheless, fighting “giants” does require that we keep the *entire system and complex ethnolinguistic and missiological realities* in view—not only at the planning (Peace Plan) stage, but also at the implementation stage (when “outsiders” in thousands of local churches attempt to put “boots on the ground”). Defeating giants means we need “Davids” to fight smarter, not masses who fight harder.

Purpose-Driven knows how to call pastors and churches to *purpose*. The most significant and strategic contribution a Purpose-Driven Peace Plan can make is in the area of *mobilization*—to find ways to *call and awaken the church to mission* and to *point the way(s)* to (rather than prescribe or facilitate) mechanisms for intentional long-term involvement with God’s *global purposes*.

What makes the Peace Plan (what I will now label a “mission mobilization plan”) unique is not its insight into “global giants”, or its proposed solution, not even the notion of getting local churches involved. This has been done before. What is unique is the *connection of missions to a larger Purpose-Driven renewal movement* that has touched and has access to tens of thousands of pastors and churches and small group members. That is, Purpose-Driven can call those churches to transformational mission in a way that few other programs can.

Thus, my bottom-line recommendation is that Purpose-Driven develop a program that is primarily a *mobilization tool* focused more pointedly on calling and educating local churches and small group members to find *their part* in God’s global plan. The Peace Plan has the potential to help Christians and small groups learn how to shape their life in Christ—vision, priorities, values, worldview, life-style, giving, intercession, relationships, sending, going—around God’s redemptive purposes for the nations. This will not require a passport or money or a travel agent, necessarily, so much as a heart and life surrender. This is no small thing.

*Len Bartlotti’s updated, expanded essay on this topic may appear later in 2005 in the **International Journal of Frontier Missions** (www.ijfm.org).*