

# Words of Truth

## Exposing The Community/Evangelical Church Movement (Part 4)

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Rick Warren began what is now called the Saddleback Church. Though they do not label themselves as a Community Church in the open, they are a huge part of the Movement. They began by being called a Community Church. Notice this from the Saddleback Church website: “On Easter of 1980, Saddleback Valley Community Church held its very first public service and 205 people, most of whom had never been to church, showed up” (<https://www.saddleback.com/sanclemente/aboutus/saddleback/index.html>). Joel Osteen heads up what is now called the Lakewood Church in Houston, TX. However, at the time they purchased the Compaq Center in Houston, they were known as the Lakewood Community Church (<http://www.christiancentury.org/article.lasso?id=1017>). These churches focus on bringing in the masses with marketing campaigns to reach out to the wants of people.

### Something For Everyone – Except For God!

Both Warren and Osteen followed in the steps of the Willow Creek Community Church in forming what are known now as “Mega Churches”. Each have sought to reach out to fill the wants of the people instead of reaching out to save the souls of the lost through preaching the truth (I Corinthians 1:18-21 and James 1:21). Saddleback boasts “we have something for everyone” (<http://www.saddleback.com/aboutsaddleback/somethingforeveryone/index.html>).

Lakewood has something for everyone too: “New Beginnings, Foundations, Life Groups, Compass Bible Studies, Encounter Ministry, Children (Kidslife), Students (Canvas), Age 26-34 (C/30), Age 35+ (Koinonia), Single Parents, Married Life, Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry, Seniors (Young at Heart), Financial Ministry, Internship Program, Music Ministry, Service Teams Ministries, and Creative Arts” (<http://www.lakewood.cc/pages/ministries/events.aspx>).

The Bible speaks of the church being one body working together (Romans 12:4-5, I Corinthians 12:14-27, and Ephesians 4:16). These “Mega Churches” want to divide and conquer through pleasing the wants of everyone. Folks, you cannot please people and God at the same time (Luke 6:26, Galatians 1:10, and I Thessalonians 2:4).

The Community Church Movement, as we noted in our first article, is about reaching the wants of people. In this endeavor, God is left out! Jesus asked: “*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say*” (Luke 6:46)? If anyone were honestly seeking the Lord, they would never turn to churches that have followed the Community Church blueprint. False teachers have long published a message of false peace and hope (Jeremiah 8:11). Some think these groups are right because of their massive numbers. It is the path of the many that Bible students are most concerned with (Matthew 7:13-14 and Luke 13:23-24; cf. II Peter 2:1-3). The errors of these people pleasing churches should be obvious.

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## Some Of These Things Should Be VERY OBVIOUS

When you look at Rick Warren, Joel Osteen, or the churches they have started, there are many things that should stand out. Rick Warren graduated from California Baptist University. He received a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Theological Seminary. Then, he received a Doctor of Ministry from Fuller Theological Seminary (<http://www.saddleback.com/aboutsaddleback/ourpastor/>). Osteen graduated from Oral Roberts University (<http://www.joelosteen.com/About/JoelOsteen/Pages/JoelOsteen.aspx>). This should tell an honest truth seeker that both of these men have degrees in the doctrines of men. You cannot be a disciple of the doctrines of men and be pleasing to the Lord at the same time (Matthew 15:9 and Colossians 2:21-22). These men are carrying the doctrines they learned in their schools along with the errors they've made up on their own to many of their followers. Being led by false teachers is an error in itself (Isaiah 9:16, Matthew 15:14, II John 9-11, and III John 9-11).

Warren's Baptist education shows here: "Baptism does not save you, but shows the world that you have already been saved. And while baptism is not required for salvation, it is a biblical command and demonstrates your love and obedience to Christ" (<http://www.saddleback.com/aboutsaddleback/whatwebelieve/>). This man has thousands of followers, none of which must have ever opened their Bibles. Had they done so, they would see that baptism does save (I Peter 3:20-21) and is commanded (Acts 10:47-48, Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:37-41, and Acts 22:16).

Oral Roberts was a fake healer ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral\\_Roberts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral_Roberts)). The time for miraculous gifts (I Corinthians 12:3-11) has ceased now that the word of God has fully been revealed (I Corinthians 13:8-13). Osteen's education at Robert's school is shown when you read this on the Lakewood Church website: "Our dedicated volunteers bring encouragement, prayers of faith, and **the healing touch of Christ to those who are hospitalized**" (<http://www.lakewood.cc/pages/ministries/Ministry.aspx?mid=27>).

On the personal websites of Warren and Osteen and on their church's websites you see constant pleas for money. The Lord's church is authorized to receive funds from members of the body on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1-2). These folks sell books, sermons, and other forms of merchandise. While faithful preachers of God's word are to be financially supported (Matthew 10:9-10, I Corinthians 9:14, and Philippians 4:15-16), preachers are not supposed to be businessmen. Warren and Osteen are wealthy because they've ripped off millions of people with their false doctrines. This should be obvious.

On both websites of these Community Churches you find offices, ministries, employees, missions, support groups, teams, staffs, human institutions doing spiritual work, etc. All of these terms, concepts, and works are foreign to the Scriptures. These things are not of God. Therefore, people should see that participation in these errors makes their service vain in the sight of God (Matthew 7:21-23; 15:7-9).

### Conclusion

It would not take very long for a student of God's word to pick apart those like Osteen and Warren. These guys are not even wolves disguised as sheep (cf. Matthew 7:15). They are just outright wolves. Everything they do is for their profit! Sad thing is, their mindset is contagious. Many in so-called "churches of Christ" have taken this numbers for profit mentality. Our final article in this series will be next week. Hopefully, it will help some who err among churches of Christ as well. We'll discuss the erring mindset of sacrificing truth on the altar of numerical growth!