

Don't Question the Pastor, He's Famous

Jim Fletcher Warns Of the Cult of Celebrity in Churches

December 20, 2013



Blogger and researcher Jim Fletcher has worked in the book publishing industry for 15 years, and is now director of the apologetics group [Prophecy Matters](#). His new book, "Truth Wins," provides important analysis of Rob Bell and his Emergent friends.

Note from Pastor Kevin Lea follows this article.

My grandparents' pastor was a simple guy: Simple home, simple old van, simple garden, simple church building, complete with wooden pews. Well actually, the church building for the first 25 years of ministry was a wooden structure, built in Iowa and hauled – in sections – to the South. It had a pot-bellied stove and cement floor. The new building wasn't much fancier.

Bro. Ronald Shoesmith didn't have a book contract or a television ministry. The only jet he'd ever seen flew high overhead. He was a simple gospel preacher, and when he died in 1995, after 53 years of ministry in a rural area, grown men stood and cried, recounting how the Shoesmiths had picked them up for Sunday school, rain or shine.

So it is that I lament the current state of the celebrity preacher in 2013 America.

The hallmark of the modern celebrity preacher is something awfully close to narcissism. They don't haul their own water. No utilitarian facilities for them. That's old school, man.

And the flat-out abuses of power that have cropped up only recently are like something out of a crime novel. Seattle Pastor Mark Driscoll was recently outed as a plagiarist by radio show host Janet Mefferd and, incredibly, after several days of a relentless PR machine in action, Driscoll – who never said one word publicly after the infamous radio interview – pulled an *apology from Mefferd, who also deleted the clear evidence of his plagiarism, from her website.*

This is the same Mark Driscoll, humble shepherd, who infamously advocates running over "bodies" with the "bus" of the vision-casting celebrity preacher when dissenters question the vision and implementation of said vision. He also referred to discernment ministry folks as "extremist."

Not a peep from national evangelical leadership.

When Rick Warren tweets that a person's character is measured by how he or she treats others, then hours later urges followers to un-follow "negative twits," one is left wondering: Where is the outrage? Where is the accountability?

The modern celebrity preacher's ministry is marked by privilege, perks, protection from scrutiny and hubris. No one in a position of authority says a word.

And the fawning! The adulation, backslapping and cross promotion is breathtaking. Steven Furtick provides canned endorsements for his friends' books, and they in turn invite him to speak at top conferences, et cetera. The marketing of the modern American pastor, something aggressively endorsed by men like Andy Stanley, is unlike anything we've ever seen. Many of them spend so

much time advancing their own personal brands – on church time – it’s amazing members put up with it.

And each celebrity pastor has another’s back. Driscoll, who is mentored by Warren, tweeted the following fawning message after Warren and his wife, Kay, appeared on “Piers Morgan Live,” discussing the aftermath of their son’s suicide: “With tears in our eyes Grace I watched @RickWarren & Kay on CNN while our 5 babies slept. Great job representing the hope of Jesus.” No such tears for the people on the receiving end of Driscoll’s Mafia-style PR hits.

Interestingly, in an eerie-though-unintentional nod to Galatians 1:10 – “For I am now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ” – Piers Morgan told Warren that their meeting was “the most inspiring interview I’ve ever done.” This from the guy who loves to shove his leftist views down the throats of Americans.

Ed Stetzer, who is somewhat of a key guy in the advancement of celebrity pastors in America, through his position as president of LifeWay Research, also tweeted ...

To read this article in its entirety, go to:

<http://www.wnd.com/2013/12/dont-question-the-pastor-hes-famous/#6rtQ8rq8AO6EJr2u.03Jim>

***Note from Pastor Kevin Lea:** I personally have witnessed this abuse of power by “famous” pastors. It is real and completely contrary to Jesus’ teachings (Mark 9:33-37). These star pastors are blinded by their pride, thinking they are doing great things for God and that anyone opposed to their inspired visions are from the devil.*

*It is true that the devil is opposed to the mission of the true church. But what happens if the Pastor is deceived into thinking **their** mission (in Rick Warren’s case – his P.E.A.C.E. project) is from God when in fact it is inspired by the devil?*

Rick Warren has been very effective in leading tens-of-thousands of pastors away from teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ (that the sinner must repent, confess to God their fallen condition, and then call on the name of the Lord Jesus, and only Jesus, in order to be saved from hell). Warren’s influence has caused the Bible to be put on the shelf in churches all across America as his “Purpose Driven” emphasis has led pastors and congregants to pursue a different gospel – for example, preaching “social justice” in the name of a generic “god” instead of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It certainly is not the God of the Bible who gives Warren’s message and books precedence over the Bible and its message of living hope. Paul makes it very clear that any departure from the true gospel is a deception from hell and that those responsible for the false gospel are “accursed.” (Galatians 1)

Compounding their error, these “different gospel” pastors reject any accountability, counsel, or rebuke from true believers. Instead, they see such as attacks from Satan instead of warnings from God and treat the person accordingly.

Jesus warned us of spiritual apostasy in the last days, another sign we are getting close to His return. (Luke 18:8)