

ASSIST News Service (ANS) - PO Box 2126, Garden Grove, CA 92842-2126 USA

Visit our web site at: www.assistnews.net -- E-mail: danjuma1@aol.com

Sunday, April 17, 2005

RICK WARREN HITS HOME RUN WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF GLOBAL PEACE PLAN TO BATTLE THE GIANTS OF OUR WORLD

Speaking before 30,000 at Angel Stadium in Anaheim, he said he believes it will herald in a new worldwide spiritual awakening in the 21st century

ANS NEWS STORY

By Dan Wooding
Founder of ASSIST Ministries

ANAHEIM, CA (ANS) -- Rick Warren, author of the best-selling book, "The Purpose Driven Life" and founding pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, hit a home run with a dramatic announcement on Sunday, April 17, before 30,000 members and attendees at the church's 25th anniversary celebration in Angel Stadium, home of the Angels baseball team. (Pictured: Rick Warren speaking at Angel Stadium).



Warren -- who is featured in the current "Time 100" cover story listing of most influential individuals for 2005 -- unveiled the church's commitment to a new reformation in Christianity and vision for a worldwide spiritual awakening in the 21st Century through the PEACE Plan that he believes will mobilize one billion foot soldiers from the Christian church in missions by the year 2020.

PURPLE HAZE

But before he made the announcement, he decided to have some fun and surprised the audience when he said, "I've always wanted to do in this stadium." He then sang an impersonation of Jimi Hendrix's hit song, Purple Haze. As the audience erupted into laughter, the church band joined in playing back up to it. (Pictured: Part of 30,000 crowd at Angel Stadium).



With that out of the way, Pastor Warren then settled down and thanked the thousands of ministry volunteers for their commitment over the years and then asked them to come onto the field. After they had received rapturous applause, he then said that the focus of the day's celebration would be on the future, not the past.

"My hope is for a new reformation in the Church and a new spiritual awakening throughout the world," Pastor Warren said. "But it will happen through ordinary people in small groups across the country and around the world."

BATTLING THE GIANTS

He then went on to unveil and outline the PEACE Plan, his aggressive and progressive vision to mobilize the American church to help churches in the developing world take on problems so big that no government - not even the United Nations -- can tackle what he called "these giants" alone.

"Our goal will be to enlist 'one billion foot soldiers for the Kingdom of God,' who will permanently change the face of international missions to take on these five "global giants" for which the church can become the ultimate distribution and change agent to overcome Spiritual Emptiness, Self-serving Leadership, Poverty, Disease and

will attack these giants, armed with five essential stories: (A) - Planting Churches, (B) - Equipping Leaders, (C) - Assisting the Poor, (G) - Caring for the Sick and (E) - Educating the Next Generation.

The special Sunday afternoon service celebrated the 25th Anniversary of Saddleback Church and the founding of the Purpose Driven Movement, which has transformed millions of lives through tens of thousands of churches in 150 countries. The church has grown to 20,000 members since the humble beginnings of the ministry with seven people meeting in Pastor Rick and Kay Warren's apartment in 1980.

Since the Purpose Driven Movement began, millions of lives have been transformed through tens of thousands of churches in 150 countries. Over 350,000 pastors and leaders in 120 countries have been trained in Purpose Driven Seminars, and over 20,000 churches in 28 countries have completed 40 Days of Purpose.

COURTHOUSE SHOOTING

Following its publication in 2002, "The Purpose Driven Life" went on to become the best selling book for 2003 and 2004, and the best-selling non-fiction hardback in history, with sales of more than 22 million copies. Pastor Warren and his wife, Kay, have set up three foundations to distribute 90 percent of the proceeds from the book back into global ministry, including assistance to individuals in developing countries who have been infected and affected by AIDS.

It was during a ministry trip to Rwanda that Rick and Kay Warren took, that the news broke of the role the message of "The Purpose Driven Life" had played in the manhunt following the March 11 courthouse shooting in Atlanta. Extensive broadcast and print news reports revealed that hostage Ashley Smith was able to gain strength and courage -- and eventually freedom from her captor, alleged gunman Brian Nichols -- after reading to him from Chapter 33 of the book entitled, "How Real Servants Act."

FIRST TIME SUCH A HUGE GATHERING FOR THE CHURCH

For the first time in more than 20 years, the 30,000 members and regular attenders of Saddleback Church convened in one location, joined by Christian leaders and other guests from around the world, including Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, who gave a message of support from his African nation.



Other program participants included Chuck Colson from Prison Fellowship and A. Larry Ross, who has been Billy Graham's press officer for 22 years. Ross read a special message of support from Mr. Graham. Also participating was Gaddi Vasquez, Director of the Peace Corps who read a message of support from President George W. Bush. (Pictured: Rick and Kay Warren and Chuck Colson at 25th anniversary event).

Musical guests included musical guests Michael W. Smith, Michael Tait and Salvador.

For Prison Fellowship founder, Chuck Colson, he said he was delighted to be back in Orange County, California, the home of Richard Nixon.

In an interview with ANS, Colson said, "I have been here before to visit the Richard Nixon Library and, of course, I was also here many times with the President. I always get happy memories of those years; happy in the sense that even though the Nixon Administration collapsed and I went to prison, it was a great era in my life and a great experience working for Richard Nixon and it was all a result of going to prison that I have been able to do more in the last 30 years of my life than I was ever able to do before. So I am grateful for all the memories."

COLSON SAYS THAT RICHARD NIXON WOULD HAVE LOVED THE PEACE PLAN

When asked if he thought that Nixon would support Warren's PEACE Plan, Colson replied, "I think he would love

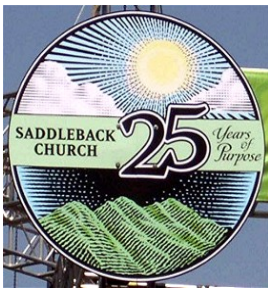
but to do the things that are needed and not waiting for the government to do it.

"I am endorsing the PEACE Plan because I have huge admiration for Rick Warren. I think it he one of the great men of our age and he has the vision and capacity to bring into being the kind of things that I have worked my soul for this last 30 years. My great passion has been to get the Church out of the sanctuary and into the mainstream of life. That's what we do. We have 50,000 volunteers and they are working in the prison and along comes Rick Warren.

"In the last six months, Rick and I have spent a lot of time talking with one another. We have the same vision, but he's got a bigger one and a great capacity to pull it off and we are going to work together and we are going to give him whatever expertise that we have and we are teach worldview to people through his churches and it the fulfillment of my life's dream."

BAPTISMS AT THE STADIUM

A unique event at the celebration was the baptisms that took place in a large heated pool that was set up outside two of the gates for people to be baptized.



Unlike a typical church gathering, before the event the parking lot was filled with tailgate parties, a children's music concert, a motorcycle jumping exhibition and a jazz band. And inside the stadium, contemporary worship music, "on the spot" live interviews, and video clips entertained the congregants before the start of the program. (Pictured: Logo for 25th anniversary).

Saddleback Church was started 25 years ago on Easter Sunday. To mark this milestone, Pastor Warren preached his signature "Purpose Driven Life" message on which the church has been built, during 12 Easter services. More than 30,000 attended -- up 6,000 from last year -- of which over 4,000 made faith commitments, a 100 percent increase in response over a year ago.

Dan Wooding is an award winning British journalist now living in Southern California with his wife Norma. He is the founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times) and the ASSIST News Service (ANS). Wooding is the co-host of the weekly radio show, "Window on the World" and was, for ten years a commentator, on the UPI Radio Network in Washington, DC. Wooding is the author of some 42 books, the latest of which is his autobiography, "From Tabloid to Truth", which is published by Theatron Books. To order a copy, go to www.fromtabloidtotruth.com. danjuma1@aol.com.



** You may republish this story with proper attribution.

[Send this story to a friend.](#)

[I would like to receive ASSIST News stories by e-mail.](#)