

## Purpose-Driven Churches (Part 5)

### **Tolerance And Conspiracies**

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**Given 29-Jul-06; Tape #786**

When Evelyn and I were visiting in British Columbia the weekend of July 8, I came across a neatly-kept, small church building just around the corner from the hotel where we were staying. On a curb-sized pillar not very far from its front door, it said: Church of Truth Community of Conscious Living. No punctuation was there. That was the name: Church of Truth Community of Conscious Living.

Immediately under that name was a brief paragraph stating: "They recognize the potential of the whole human being. We encourage a personal journey of self-discovery leading to an enhanced relationship with life."

The first thing I want you to notice is that God was nowhere mentioned on that monument. You might recall that toward the end of my previous sermon I mentioned the elements of Occultism appearing within a Purpose-Driven Church context.

The term "Community of Conscious Living" and the other term, "personal journey of self-discovery" are dead give-aways clearly identifying this group to anyone who knows what to look for.

This whole group was a blending of Occult New Age Religion with a so-called Purpose-Driven Church philosophy. One might think that this is a strange partnership, but it is not an unusual occurrence because of the strong emphasis on tolerance preached by the Purpose-Driven Church leadership.

Now very much of the outcome they desire depends upon the members' tolerance for each other, but more about that a little bit later. From the very subtle appearance of the facility, it indicated to me how strongly and for how long the Purpose-Driven Church philosophy has leaked beyond the United States and into other nations.

I received an email from somebody in Australia with no connection at all to us, but they were looking at the web site and probably downloaded a sermon on this subject. This person said that the Purpose-Driven Church is all through Australia.

A second interesting item appeared in an article taken from the Newswithviews.com website on July 6, 2006, titled "The Bible On Butt Cracks by Marsha West.

I wonder if any of you older folks have wondered how poorly and inappropriately dressed people are when they even deign to attend church anymore. This woman mentions in her article men wearing sloppy shorts so low that one can see their underwear, and tee shirts advertising rock bands or a sport team or a company they work for. She mentioned women dressed in short-shorts, low-cut clingy tops, or low-rider skin-tight jeans so low one can see the woman's butt crack. Extreme informality is the rule of the day.

However, clothing is used in the Bible as an external easily-seen symbol of the state of one's heart; that is, one's mind and one's attitude toward God, and thus one's conversion. A biblically-dressed person in sackcloth is thus either to be understood as being physically poor or poor in spirit; that is, humble before God.

This particular article by Marsha West was well-written, pointing out the disrespect for God so clearly shown by today's very informal church attire. About halfway through the article she wrote this:

"Today's pragmatic clergy avoid the issue of improper church attire. They steer so clear of potential controversy that even the teaching of essential Christian doctrine is avoided. Heaven forbid that they should offend anyone. The modern church has been sold a bill of goods. Church leaders have been persuaded by the seeker-friendly Purpose-Driven Church movement, that in order to reach un-churched Harry and Sally, the church facility should have curb appeal."

There are two significant thoughts in what she wrote. The first appears in the mention of pragmatism. Pragmatism indicates a "whatever works" philosophy. It indicates a compromise made to achieve a goal. It is a major element in politics. It indicates a backing away from conviction regarding a higher standard.

Secondly, she directly blamed the Purpose-Driven Church leadership for instituting, permitting and promoting this sloppy, disrespectful attire. Both of these significant points show the degenerate influence of the Purpose-Driven Church.

As we begin today's message I want to return to the end of the previous one to give you a 4-point summary of what I covered during that sermon until I ran out of time. I already had the summary, but I did not have a chance to give it because I did not want to earn the name of, "On-Too-Long!"

number 1: Our hope, our desire, and our goal in life must be the same as what the Bible presents to us, because all of the Bible's instruction leads to that end. Our hope is the resurrection into the Kingdom of God established by God on Earth through Jesus Christ.

number 2: By way of contrast, the hope of the Purpose-Driven Church is to become a powerful global-wide force for good that leads to establishing a man-devised kingdom of supreme influence for good.

This is one of those things that sounds good until you start thinking about it. The key there is a "man-devised."

number 3: To achieve their purpose they will set aside any biblical doctrine that hinders their unity, while at the same time preaching unity with their purpose at all cost.

That is a bombshell!

number 4: The bottom line is, that though they are working very diligently at producing the outcome they desire, they are neither building their hopes nor their daily lives upon the sayings

of Jesus Christ. They are building their house on the sands of human opinion.

You may recall that toward the end of the previous sermon I mentioned that the Purpose-Driven Churches emphasized some of the same terminology a much more biblically-based Christian group would. Terms such as: loyalty, leadership, purity in life, community, peace, fellowship, tolerance, goals, overcoming, success, etc., etc., etc. However, because they are not headed toward the same goal the Bible teaches, those terms do not have the same applications as they do to people like us.

Do you understand what happens when somebody like us reads a book like "The Purpose-Driven Life" or "The Purpose-Driven Church" written by Dr. Rick Warren? Do you know what happens? More than likely we will read *our* understanding of those terms, *our* meanings, and *our* applications of them into what *they* wrote, and become led into thinking they hold the same positions regarding Christianity as we do.

No, brethren, they very much do not.

During that message I touched on the word "tolerance," using it as one example. Now tolerance is a very important term toward achieving the outcome they desire. I want to review that term's meaning, because their insistence on tolerance in each member is especially important to another area of life which I perceive that the Outcome-Based Religions are ultimately attached.

The vast majority of people, including us, upon hearing that word, or reading that word, insert the biblical usage of "respect." If you are tolerant, you respect; and thus you endure with, you put up with, or you bear with the other person as he overcomes and grows. However, *their* usage, though it includes some of the normal applications, in actual practice means "accept the other without question."

Spiritually, that is deadly!

In other words, no attempt is to be made to correct a flaw in another person's thinking. The membership is urged instead to seek common grounds of understanding. This is something that sounds good, but only on the surface in regard to God and His way of life, because God deals with absolutes. It is devastating to the purity of teaching, understanding, and godly accomplishment.

Here is a simple illustration: Suppose that when you were going to school the teacher never corrected your wrong belief and understanding that two plus two equals five—an error in something you believe, something that you have come to understand. What this policy does in terms of religion over the long haul is that it suddenly promotes polytheism. In addition to that they are promoting a very "odd to us" unity in religious confusion—a unity that is held together by scriptural ignorance, the emotional entertainment during services, and the people's sincere belief in the hope being preached to them.

Perhaps this has not really sunk into you as to how important this may be. I brought a quote with me because I was rather astounded when Evelyn pointed it out to me this morning. This appeared in *The Charlotte Observer* this morning. This will give you an idea of just how influential these people are in the United States of America.

This article stated that *The Church Report* magazine weighs in with its list of the 50 most influential churches in the nation, choosing number 1, *Willow Creek Community Church* in South Barrington, Illinois, led by the Reverend Bill Hybels. number 2, is the *Saddleback Church* in Lake Forrest, California (just outside of Santa Ana), led by the Reverend Rick Warren. number 1 and number 2 are both Purpose-Driven Churches.

Do you see whom they are influencing? They are influencing the people who responded to this poll. I can guarantee you the poll went out to church pastors. There was only one North or South Carolina church that made the list, number 15, which was the *Seacoast Church* in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, which is right across the river from Charleston.

In the first 15 there are three Purpose-Driven Churches. I did not see the rest of the list, but I am going to look it up because they give the website, and I want to see what the rest of them are. I can guarantee you there are going to be more than the *Saddleback Church* and the *Willow Creek Church* in there.

Remember what I said, that over the long haul, by their use of the term "tolerance" they are promoting polytheism. This gets more and more horrible as I go along.

Now, how was this use of tolerance arrived at? I am going to give you a simple, but nonetheless, true answer. All it took was a fairly small group of influential theologians, overwhelmingly American and British Protestant, observing the divided and disarrayed churchianity that is across the span of the United States and Britain, who more or less simultaneously arrived at a similar conclusion: *All truths are equal*—that is, that no one spiritual truth is superior to any other spiritual truth.

This concept seemingly exploded on the religious scene in America in the 1990s, but the truth is that it had been gradually building, especially within American culture, for decades, especially since the late 1940s.

What this means in actual practice is this: If a fundamental Christian would defend a practicing Wiccan—one who is worshipping Satan, practicing Occultism—by stating "I disagree with your beliefs, but I will fight to the death to defend your right under the Constitution to practice your religion within the bounds of the law."

According to the Purpose-Driven Churches, this is bigotry and intolerance under their new definition of "tolerance."

Now why is this deemed bigotry and intolerance according to the new definition of tolerance?

Because these theologians teach that even though the statement is submissive to the law of the land (that is, American law), it still falls far short of the objective of the new definition of accepting the person, and especially his beliefs, *as every bit as good as his own*.

Did you hear what I just said? That according to their definition, worshipping the Devil is just as good as worshipping Christ, and so the statement by the Christian shows that he still feels Christianity is better than worshipping the Devil. So under the new definition of tolerance, this same fundamentalist Christian must *praise* Wicca as truth and *praise* those who practice Wicca for seeking their own truth. This is self-discovery through experiencing God. Remember, I told

you that if you know what to look for, you can pinpoint what is going on in that little church around the corner.

"Experiencing the god within you." Now do you get where this is taking us? If all truths are equal, then all religions are equal. Then any Christian who quotes Jesus, saying, "No man can come to the Father but by Me" is, by their definition of tolerance, already deemed an arrogant fool. Furthermore, once the new tolerance permeates the culture, including the court system, the Christian will lose legal right to preach the Gospel publicly and have no voice in expressing his opinion, and so the great commission given there in Matthew 28: 19-20 will be effectively stifled.

Can you imagine a true Christian evangelist going on the radio and saying, "I know that Wicca is every bit as good as what I am trying to sell you, but, . . . "

What is happening, brethren, is weird, and the sad thing is the public is buying it because they do not know any better. They are so misinformed about what God and the Bible says. They are impressed by the entertainment, they are impressed by a real smooth speaker, and they are just like blind sheep being lead to the slaughter. You are living through it. Within this group this concept that "all truths are equal" must be tolerated for the sake of unity. This is a great, great evil. And, these people have the chutzpah to call themselves Christian!

I want you to turn to Deuteronomy 4: 15. This is just before the commandments are repeated.

Deuteronomy 4: 15-20 Take you therefore good heed unto yourselves, for you saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spoke unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire. Lest you corrupt yourselves and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flies in the air, the likeness of any thing that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: And lest you lift up your eyes unto heaven, and when you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD your God has divided unto all nations under the whole heaven. But the LORD has taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as you are this day.

He is saying there that anything you might dream up, since you never saw Him in the first place, is going to be a lie.

I want you to see how insistent God is, that we, the descendents of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whether physically or spiritually, are to let no concept of God come between us and the true God and His way. In another place He says, "I am a jealous God." He will book no competition in the minds of His people. These people that I have been speaking about now for these last four sermons are creating another god right before the eyes of the people.

So, why is there such a strong warning in Deuteronomy 4? The reason is because sliding into idolatry is so easily done. Human nature is so self-centered, so unbelieving and impatient that it is in almost constant rebellion against living by spiritual faith.

Let us go back to the New Testament, to Romans 1:18-19.

Romans 1:18-19 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold [or who suppress] the truth in unrighteousness. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them.

Where has God showed it to them? It is in His word! Not only in His word, but verse 20 says:

Romans 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Deity [or nature, it should read] so that they are without excuse.

Do you see what He says in regard to the Purpose-Driven Church? They have no excuse for what they are doing.

Romans 1:21-24 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.

Even such a thing that is so simple, so easily seen, is to look at the creation. It is hard not to see the creation anywhere one is, out in the open, the things God has made, and yet they close their minds to what they see and come up with evolution to deny what they see. That is what He means when He says they suppress the truth.

Are the teachings of psychologists and philosophers, Buddha, and all the other gods of the Hindu, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Africans, and the Muslims equal to the teachings of God the Creator? The hubris of these people to teach such a thing that all truths are equal and still claim to be Christian is incredible!

Let us take a look at what God says in Isaiah 40:12-15.

Isaiah 40:12-15 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales,

and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counselor has taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he takes up the isles as a very little thing.

Isaiah 40:18 To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare unto him [the Creator]?

Do you see what verse 18 is asking you in regard to what the Purpose-Driven Churches are saying about God? They are comparing Him to philosophers, to psychologists, to the Hindu god, to the Muslims' god.

Isaiah 40:18-28 To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare unto him? The workman melts a graven image, and the goldsmith spreads it over with gold, and casts silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he has no oblation chooses a tree that will not rot; he seeks unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image that shall not be moved. Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth [that is, from creation]? It is he that sits upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretches out the heavens as a curtain, and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in: That brings the princes to nothing; he makes the judges of the earth as vanity. Yes, they shall not be planted; yes, they shall not be sown: yes, their stock shall not take root in the earth; and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. To whom then will you liken me, or shall I be equal? Says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who has created these things, that brings out their host by number: he calls them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one fails. Why say you, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD and my judgment is passed over from my God? Have you not known? Have you not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faints not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding.

And yet they have the gall to compare philosophers and psychologists and Buddha to Jesus Christ.

I want you to answer something for your own benefit by evaluating some easily obtainable evidence. Does not God challenge us to prove what He says? I want you to see this verse as an

example just so you know where He does this. There are other places as well, but I want you to look at Malachi 3. The direct context has to do with tithing, but the principle holds true elsewhere.

Malachi 3:10 Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Do you see what He says? He says, "Test Me." "Prove Me. See how I will respond."

I just want you to think about a couple of simple things. Despite what history shows of the astounding sinfulness of the Israelitish people in the lands that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses and David gave them, would you rather live in those God-given lands, or in the land of the gods of the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Taoists, the Confucius, etc?

Would you rather live in the United States, or in Iraq, or Afghanistan, or Pakistan? Need I go any further? Non-Israelitish people practically beat down the door to emigrate into the God-given lands. Look at the illegal immigration we are going through in this country right at this time in our history. The same general thing is happening to all the Israelitish countries.

Has not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob kept His promises to them by giving them the glory of all lands, overflowing with abundant water, fertile soil rich in minerals, and moderate weather patterns? Has He not given them His word from which they can extract civil laws and judicial principles that provide a foundation for a way of life with the best and most personal liberties existing anywhere in the world?

Answer this, ladies: Would you rather live in America, or in a Muslim nation under Sharia law in which you would be nothing more than another piece of property consigned for your entire life to dressing in what is little more than a black tent?

Do you understand, without saying it, that these Purpose-Driven Church leadership people are directing people to give up what God gave us by making the God of heaven equal with all other gods, to tolerate them?

Isaiah 45:20-22 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together you that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell you, and bring them near; yes, let them take counsel together; who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I the LORD? And there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

Isaiah 46:5-10 To whom will you liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like? They lavish gold out of the bag, and

weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he makes it a god: they fall down, yes, they worship. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he stand; from his place shall he not remove: yes, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble. Remember this, and show yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O you transgressors. Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

The evidence of the supreme superiority of the God of Abraham is so apparent that there is no reasonable excuse for failure to recognize it. The God of the Bible truly *is* God.

Do you remember in the movie "The Ten Commands," that Yul Brynner, playing Pharaoh, said, "Moses' God *is* God." God does what He says. His word is absolute and sure, whether it involves a promise of national greatness, the knowledge of how to live, the truth of the spiritual purpose He is working out—the Bible's God *is* God.

Now once seen, this very factor concerning tolerance is a major clue to where this news we are hearing every day is headed, because it was done before, and God recorded it, so I believe that this is yet another piece of evidence that we are in the end-time.

This grouping of religions, called "The Outcome-Based Religion," into one loose body is part and parcel of what is now openly proclaimed as "the New World Order." It may be a very important part, and so my final note on this part of this series is—Brethren, be very careful of these people's terminology. We just covered one word.

Tolerance and unity, or a word that may be used not so much in the religious area but in the political area of what is building, is that instead of the word unity, they will use the word "solidarity." Be very careful of that word, because that is one of the favorite words of those promoting the New World Order. In the religious area they say "unity" because that registers to a religious mind. The political people will say "solidarity," which is a synonym of unity, but it has political overtones to it. So be very careful that you understand what they mean, because they want you to ready *your* concepts into what they are saying. It is part of the bait.

As we begin this next section of this series, I eventually am going to have to turn back to the biblical pattern that was established many, many centuries ago, because what we are seeing happening is largely a spiritual operation. I want you to go to Ephesians 2:1-6. Paul is here speaking to Christians.

Ephesians 2:1-6 And you has he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh,

fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened [made alive] us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved;) And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

The importance of the application of these truths expressed by Paul to these sermons in the times in which we live I do not feel can be expressed too strongly. I want you to reflect back momentarily in order to provide a foundation for your thinking on the series of sermons I gave which I titled "Communication and Babylon." These were given not too long ago. Just after the Feast actually. A second series of sermons I gave covered "The Father-Son Relationship"

In the "Communication" series I covered the truth that human nature is nothing more than the communication of Satan's nature into our minds, primarily accomplished through the surrounding culture that he and his demon helpers have established.

In order to escape this, we are commanded by God to come out of this world. This cannot be physically done, but spiritually it *can* be accomplished by developing the relationship with God that He opens to us by calling us, granting us repentance, forgiving our sins by means of Christ's blood, and giving us His spirit and access to Him.

In "The Father-Son Relationship" series, I spent some time on how the Bible uses the term "spirit." It is used to represent an invisible, immaterial, dynamic power, effectively working to build or destroy. The Holy Spirit is the mind and power of God by which He enables us to make right choices and work effectively for good.

We are going to go back to the book of Job to pick up three verses.

Job 32:6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and you are very old, wherefore I was afraid [or respectful], and dare not show you my opinion.

This young man was sitting there, listening to the arguments that were going back and forth between Job's three friends and Job himself.

Job 32:7-8 I said, Days [or age] should speak, [He was respectful of their age because he was a young man] and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding.

I am really just picking up on that last comment by Elihu, that there is a spirit in man apart from God's Spirit, or from Satan's spirit. That spirit is, in one sense, what makes a human being human, setting us apart from mere beasts, and adding vast potential regarding what we can accomplish and become. But in one sense, there appears to be a down-side to the fact that we

have a spirit. Notice, I said it *only appears* to be a downside.

Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceives the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The reason it is not really a downside is because, as deemed it wise in His purpose, and whatever this is, it is that we have to deal with it. So the downside is, that even as God—our holy, powerful, and pure-in-character Creator—can communicate by spirit means with us, so also can the foul, evil clever adversary and destroyer Satan. The communication can either take place without a person even being any the wiser that it is occurring unless the person has been instructed by God and recognizes the attitude and drift of the communication he is receiving either in his thoughts, or the verbal instruction from an already-deceived person.

Did you hear what I said? Satan, or God, can put thoughts into our mind and use us to say something, or to do something. One thing you know for sure is this: Whatever God puts into our mind is going to be good for us, good for others. But you can be just as sure that any thought that Satan puts into us is going to be evil, corrupting, degenerative, and destructive, even though on the surface it might appear to be very appealing to human nature.

I am occasionally asked if I believe in conspiracy theories. It has not always been this way, but now I answer "Absolutely." Let me qualify my absolute belief. I first became aware of the possibility, in the 1968-1969 school year, following the reading of the book, "None Dare Call It Treason." Some of you may have heard of that one and maybe have even read it, but there was another one concerning the Federal Reserve Banking System.

I really did not know what to think of the propositions that these men were postulating. The concept seemed to me to be rather fantastic because so much time and loyalty of the people involved in a common concept over such a long period of time seemed impossible to me to overcome in my thinking, and so I put the concepts aside, but I never really forgot about it. Gradually, over the years, the pieces began falling together, and conspiracies gradually became the reality.

Let us go to II Samuel 15. We are going to look at verses 12 and 13.

II Samuel 15:12-13 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom. And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after [or are following] Absalom.

Here we have, described by God in His word, a conspiracy within the government of His people Israel to overthrow the rule of God's duly-appointed man—David. We know how that one turned out, but let us carry on. We are going to go to II Kings 12:19-10.

II Kings 12:19 And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

Joash was king of Israel. Now Israel was divided in two—the northern ten tribes carrying the name Israel, and the southern two tribes carrying the name Judah.

II Kings 12:20 And his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash [the king] in the house of Millo, which goes down to Silla.

Here is another in which those working under the king conspired to assassinate him, and they succeeded.

II Kings 14:19 Now they made a conspiracy against him [Amaziah, Joash's son] in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there.

Two generations; two kings assassinated.

II Kings 15:8 In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months.

II Kings 15:10 And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

He slew him. He assassinated him right in a very public place.

II Kings 15:14-15 For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

First Shallum conspired against Zachariah—Joash's great-grandson, king of Israel—and succeeded in assassinating him. Then Shallum in turn was conspired against by Menahem, and was successfully assassinated. Out of four generations, three of the kings were assassinated through conspiracies. Are you getting the point?

Gradually it began to dawn to me that conspiring is a way of life for Israelitish people. It matters not whether the reason is political, military, economic, academic, or whatever, man is driven by a conspiring nature.

Go now to the book of Micah, verses 1 and 2.

Micah 2:1-2 Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. [In other words, they carry it out.] And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.

This is a reporting not about a conspiracy to assassinate a king, but it is talking about people planning—the word here is "devising"—evil plans to take things away from ordinary citizens, and if they have to kill to do it, they will do it. I just turned to this verse so that you will see that conspiracies are not just isolated events. They are going on, brethren, all the time. At any rate, through the years, as I was studying, I began to notice how frequently the words conspiracy, conspired, or conspirators appeared in the *King James Version*. Actually 30 different times the words appear in the *King James Version*, but brethren, there is much more.

Turn to Psalm 2:1-7. I am doing it because this psalm applies, is aimed at Jesus Christ.

Psalm 2:1-7 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD has said unto me, You are my Son; this day have I begotten you.

There was a little bit of a difference in Psalm 2.

Psalm 83:1-5 Keep not you silence, O God: hold not your peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, your enemies make a tumult: and they that hate you have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against your people, and consulted against your hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against you:

We turned away directly from the word conspiracy, and in these last two psalms we began to see words that we might use in other circumstances. Notice: "They took counsel together for an evil purpose," or "they have taken crafty counsel," or "consulted together with one consent."

How many possible synonyms can there be for conspired, or planned? How about words like advise, plotted, consulted, conferred, considered, suggested, proposed, schemed, cooperated, devised, conceived, connived, concocted, engineered, framed? And there are more! The only

major difference between these words is the context in which they might be used. For instance, the word "planned" has a very broad usage, and usually suggests a serious, but congenial setting. The word "plot" definitely changes the mood to being somewhat stronger as suggesting that an evil turn is at hand. "Conspire" or "scheme" very strongly signal that an evil purpose is underway.

In other words, what I am saying is that I could not restrict my thinking regarding possible biblical support for conspiracies to the word "conspiracy" itself, because God created man as a thinking, planning being. Are we not created with a mind not merely capable of reasoning, but of reasoning spatially? That is, that we can think in terms of time and space, and thus we are able to set an objective, and then conceive a plan of action requiring a space of time to accomplish, and then proceed step by step to carry out the accomplishment of our desire. Whether it is planning, plotting, or conspiring, it is an elementary human form of, "God's knowing the end from the beginning."

We are going to go to the New Testament to the book of Mark.

Mark 3:6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

This took place early in Jesus' ministry, and already they were beginning to conspire to put Him to death.

Matthew 22:15 Then went the Pharisees and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

Luke 20:19 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

Mark 14:10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests to betray him unto them.

Was he conspiring? Oh, yes he was.

Turn to the book of Acts.

Acts 23:12-15 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy. And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. Now therefore you with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you tomorrow, as though you would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to

kill him.

Psalms 37:12 The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes upon him with his teeth.

I just included that to let you know the proclivity to conspire will expand beyond the attacks against the leadership.

Now do you remember one of those quotes I gave to you the last time by Ingrid Schluter? I gave earlier that Dr. Warren has already stated that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century fundamentalists will be the enemy. That is very interesting from this man who is so firm in his teaching about tolerance. If he is going to be tolerant to Wicca, why is he not tolerant to fundamentalists? But he has already labeled fundamentalists as the enemy, which means he is not going to be tolerant to fundamentalists. I will not get to it in this sermon, but I will tell you a little later *why*.

There is one more factor why I believe in conspiracies, and it is a major one. But, I think I had better stop because this point is going to take me overtime, and I think we have reached a good breaking point here.

Just remember at the end that there are conspiracies all through the Bible, showing that man is a conspiring being, and so, for there to be conspiracies in our world and in our time is nothing unusual. The only thing unusual is that this conspiracy involves the entire globe.

A brief summary:

number 1: Be very careful of Purpose-Driven Church terminology. The words unity, community, fellowship, and tolerance are especially important to their purpose, and these terms do not mean exactly the same things to them as to us. Be sure you understand what *they* mean.

number 2: They teach that all truths are equal, and this abominable doctrine elevates psychologists, philosophers, Occultists and heathen idolatries to the same level as our Creator God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

I will save the third item for the next time I speak. Until then, I hope you have a good remainder of the Sabbath.