

P3 – Professional Pontifications on Possible Purposes plus Personal Purposes Proposed & Pursued

Dear: No doubt you'll be pleased to know that, for this chapter (with its "snappy little title" ☺), I've written little more than a page or so.

"Oh, good, cause I gotta..."

Child! If you "gotta", then go for it! But when you've "got it", I urge you to come back here to read what others have written. That is, Dear, essentially this entire chapter contains "just" copies (from the internet) of what others have written. And I wanted to place these writings in front of you (rather than just provide you with links), because I hope that, thereby, the probability will increase that a certain little skunk will read them all!

"Is a certain grandfather suggesting..." started a certain grandchild, feigning innocence. No, Dear, I'm not just suggesting: I'm willing to bet good money on it! I am, however, not quite so willing to bet that I won't get in trouble for quoting so much copyrighted material – although I'll do my best to provide complete references.

"And so, what's so important that you're willing to risk lawsuits?"

Now, that's more like it! Dear: In what follows, I want to show you a number of examples of what other people have argued to be "the purpose of life". I'll start with comments from a psychologist, then show you opinions from some clerics, and finally show you comments by two Humanists.

My first example is what I consider to be a good article, well written by C. George Boeree (pronounced "boo-RAY"), a professor of psychology at Shippensburg University (a member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education). With this example, I'm asking you to consider a summary of the purpose (or purposes) people pursue – as generally agreed upon by psychologists. In this example, though, "the purpose of life" isn't addressed directly; instead, the author addresses (essentially equivalently) people's "motivations". In the article and "as per usual", I've added a few notes (but just a few) in "square brackets" [such as these].

Motivation¹

by C. George Boeree

Now we move from questions about what we feel [described on Boeree's other web pages] to questions about what we want. As I [Boeree] said earlier, the "self" is what gives things their meaning. Some philosophers and psychologists suggest that the only thing that makes a person (or any living creature) different from a mechanical device is that a person gives things meaning.

We give things meaning because we have **desires**. Because of desire, some things have value to us, and some don't; some are relevant to us, some are not; and value or relevance is just another way of talking about meaning.

Behaviorists and other theorists who take a fairly biological approach to psychology suggest that our desires all boil down to the desire to survive. So our most fundamental needs are for food, water, rest, and the avoidance of pain. More complex motivations are seen as derived from these by learning.

Freudians have a similar view, and refer to desire as **libido**. They, however, focus more on the need to survive beyond the individual's life-span through reproduction. Since the survival of all needs and the instincts that serve them in fact depends on reproduction, it is quite reasonable to make sex the key desire! Sociobiology agrees with the Freudians on this.

Humanists use the word **actualization**, which means "the desire to maintain and enhance the self." So "maintenance" certainly includes survival, as long as it is understood that we are referring to the survival of the psychological self as well as the physical self. And "enhancement" means we do more than just try to survive.

For example, most "lower" animals react to problems and learn from their mistakes. But "higher" animals have certain extra desires – such as **curiosity** and **play** – that encourage them to learn about potential problems before any serious mistakes happen. Kittens and puppies and human children are notorious for this kind of "enhancement." It is sometimes referred to as competence motivation.

Social creatures such as ourselves rely on each other for much of their "maintenance and enhancement." One thing we need, especially early in our lives, is **positive regard**, meaning attention, affection, etc. At first, it's a matter of physical survival; later in life, it's a sign that we have support around us.

Human beings take this need a step further: Because we have an internal mental life (thanks to anticipation, etc.), we can internalize both the need we have for positive

¹ This article is available, e.g., at <http://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/genpsymotivation.html>; it includes the copyright statement "© Copyright 2002, 2003 C. George Boeree."

regard and its satisfaction or non-satisfaction. In other words, we have a desire and need for **positive self-regard**, also known as self-respect, self-worth, or self-esteem.

Poor self-esteem – the **inferiority complex** – is one of the most common sources for psychological problems a therapist finds. Most of us have these complexes about one thing or another: looks, intelligence, strength, social skills, etc. Even the bully, the beauty, and the braggart – people with superiority complexes – can be understood as people with poor self-esteem who are taking it out on others!

I would like to suggest that all these motivations are real and relevant to understanding people. And we can differ with each other in regards to what motivates each of us: Some of us “live to eat;” others are “sex fiends;” others are curious to a fault; others are “people people;” and others still are driven by ego; and so on.

Habit

Another aspect of motivation that is hard to overestimate is **habit**. If you think about it, nearly all of the things we’ve been talking about involve returning to an unstressed state. When we talk about physical needs, for example, we often talk about homeostasis: like a thermostat that controls a furnace, we eat when we are low on nutrients, we stop eating when we have enough.

The same thing applies to psychological phenomena: When our understanding of things is lacking and we fail to anticipate, we scramble to improve our understanding; once we understand something, and our anticipations are right on target, we are satisfied. In fact, it almost seems that we spend our lives trying to be unconscious! After all, we feel distress when things go wrong and delight when things improve, but **neither** when things are going just right.

Habits are things that are so thoroughly learned, that work so smoothly, with so little distress or delight, that they are **unconscious**.

When habits concern social behaviors, we call them **rituals**. Coronations, marriage ceremonies, funerals, standing on line, taking turns when talking, saying “hello, how are you,” whether you want to know or not – all are examples of rituals.

There are also ways of thinking and perceiving that are so thoroughly learned we tend not to be conscious of them: attitudes, mind-sets, norms, prejudices, defenses, and so on.

The key to identifying habits and rituals is that the acts are essentially emotionless and unconscious. Showering, for example: Odds are that you wash in pretty much the same way every day, as if you were playing-out a computer program. Mind you, things “around” the habit or ritual may be emotional (e.g., a funeral), but the things done are done rather automatically – like driving a car, once you’ve caught on – until things go wrong!

When that happens, you experience some kind of distress. Go ahead, tell someone who asks “how are you” all about how you really are! Or stand the wrong way in an elevator. Or interrupt the smooth flow of a restaurant (e.g. by taking peoples’ orders, “to help out”). This is called **Garfinkling**, after Harold Garfinkle, who invented it. It will reveal rules of behavior that are so ritualized that we’ve forgotten they exist.

Anyway, maintaining things the way they are, keeping social “law and order,” is an extremely powerful motivation. In its most positive form, it’s our desire for peace and contentment. In its most negative form, it is our resistance to anything new or different.

Higher motivations

At the other end of the spectrum are what we might call **higher motivations**, such as creativity and compassion.

There are times when we are, for a moment, “transported outside ourselves,” or, to put it another way, when we feel an identity with something greater than ourselves. Many people experience these moments when they stand at the rim of the Grand Canyon for the first time, or walk into one of the great cathedrals of Europe for the first time. The ocean, the acropolis, sequoias, hummingbirds, music, even a great book or movie can do this as well. We could call it a peak, spiritual, or mystical experience, or just call it **awe**.

This kind of thing also happens with certain behaviors. Mountain climbers talk about the **flow** experience (Czentimihalyi), when their minds are fully occupied with the task at hand and they become “one with the mountain.” Dancers, actors, musicians, and athletes mention similar experiences of involvement.

Creative activities can also give us these feelings. Artists, musicians, writers, scientists, and crafts people talk about a point at which they are led by their creation, rather than the other way around.

And we feel it when we truly **love** someone, when they become more important than ourselves. Albert Schweitzer said that only those who serve others can be truly happy. This is called **compassion**.

In all these examples, we see not just “maintenance and enhancement of self” but a transcendence of self, a loss of self that paradoxically leads to an expansion of self. Most religions and philosophies make these their highest values.

Freedom

There is something very peculiar about people: While, from an outside view, it may seem as if our behaviors were being completely determined by the various forces that bear down on us – genetics, the physical world, social pressures – we seem to be capable of “pulling back” now and then, for a moment or two, from the stream of

events. We can pause to reflect on things. And we can imagine and think about things that aren't immediately present.

For example: Sometimes one part of us – say, our inherited physiology – wants sexual gratification, and wants it now. Another part of us – say our social upbringing – wants respect, safety, virtue, affection, or whatever. If we were completely determined, we would simply go with the stronger force, and life would be easy. Instead, we have the ability to weigh the forces.

Sometimes this is a less-than-fully conscious process. We can weigh two forces emotionally, in terms of the relative anxiety and eagerness. But we can step back a bit and add certain rational considerations, and consider things like the meaning of sin, the odds of getting caught, or whether the urge will go away if you ignore it. Worrying about things this way may be unpleasant, but it is a sign of our freedom to choose!

We can also create new options. Only people deal in possibilities as well as realities! When things seem to be a matter of either-or, damned-if-you-do and damned-if-you-don't, we can pause, and reflect, and create a third – or fourth, or fifth... – choice. Even when alternatives seem totally absent, some freedom remains. The writer and philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, after being faced with Gestapo torture, discovered that he could always say no! You at very least have a choice of the attitude you will take towards your suffering, hard though it may be.

All this is very frustrating to anyone looking to make psychology into a “hard science” like chemistry or physics. True, much of the time we are as determined as falling bricks. But at our best, we don't follow “laws of human behavior” – we create ourselves!

A Hierarchy of Needs

It is clear that some needs are far more demanding than others: If you are hungry, thirsty, and gasping for air, you have to take care of the air first, the water second, and the food third. **Abraham Maslow** took this idea and created his now famous **hierarchy of needs**. Beyond the details of air, water, and food, he laid out five broader layers: the physiological needs, the need for safety, the need for belonging, the need for esteem, and the need to actualize the self, in that order.

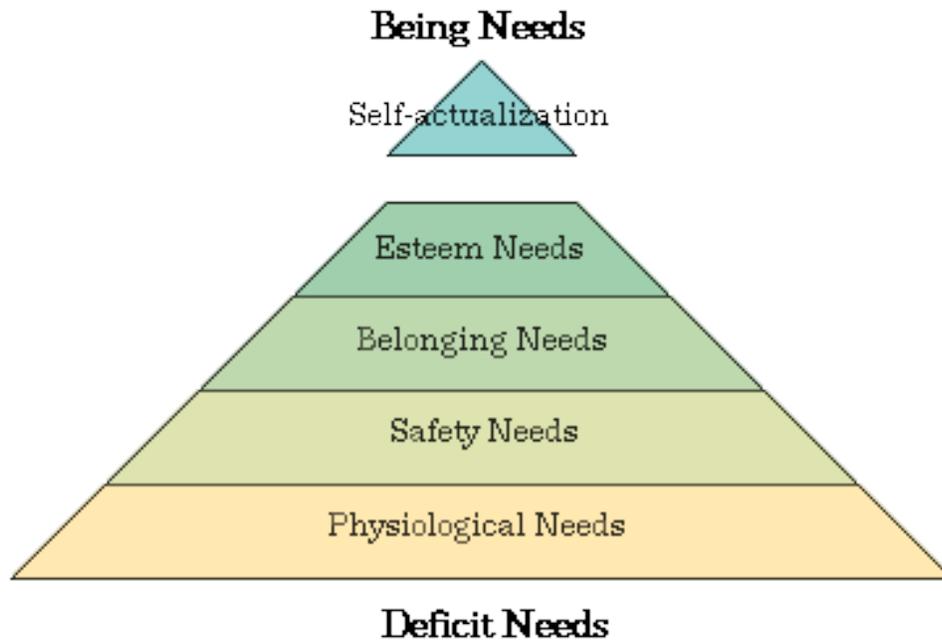
1. **The physiological needs.** These include the needs we have for oxygen, water, protein, salt, sugar, calcium, and other minerals and vitamins. They also include the need to maintain a pH balance (getting too acidic or base will kill you) and temperature (98.6 or near to it). Also, there's the needs to be active, to rest, to sleep, to get rid of wastes (CO₂, sweat, urine, and feces), to avoid pain, and to have sex. Quite a collection!

2. **The safety and security needs.** When the physiological needs are largely taken care of, this second layer of needs comes into play. You will become increasingly

interested in finding safe circumstances, stability, protection. You might develop a need for structure, for order, some limits.

3. **The love and belonging needs.** When physiological needs and safety needs are, by and large, taken care of, a third layer starts to show up. You begin to feel the need for friends, a sweetheart, children, affectionate relationships in general, even a sense of community. Looked at negatively, you become increasingly susceptible to loneliness and social anxieties.

4. **The esteem needs.** Next, we begin to look for a little self-esteem. Maslow noted two versions of esteem needs, a lower one and a higher one. The lower one is the need for the respect of others, the need for status, fame, glory, recognition, attention, reputation, appreciation, dignity, even dominance. The higher form involves the need for self-respect, including such feelings as confidence, competence, achievement, mastery, independence, and freedom. Note that this is the “higher” form because, unlike the respect of others, once you have self-respect, it’s a lot harder to lose!



All of the preceding four levels he calls **deficit needs**. If you don’t have enough of something – i.e. you have a deficit – you feel the need. But if you get all you need, you feel nothing at all! In other words, they cease to be motivating. As the old blues song goes, “you don’t miss your water till your well runs dry!”

5. The last level is a bit different. Maslow called it **self-actualization** or the **being needs**. Self-actualization as Maslow uses the term refers to the kind of things we have called higher motivations – creativity, compassion, the appreciation of beauty, truth, justice, and so on. They differ from the deficit needs in that they become a part of your being, part of who you are. Maslow once said that the being needs were the desire to “be all that you can be!”

I hope, Dear, that you found the above summary by Boeree to be reasonable and readable. And, yes: I know that I went through Maslow's scheme in an earlier chapter (including mentioning some of its limitations, such as significant variations among cultures), but are you really so busy that...

Anyway, Dear, let me now turn from "purposes" (or "motivations") as assessed by psychologists to some examples of "purposes" proposed by various clerics, purposes claimed to be communicated from God to various prophets (or "profits"). In earlier chapters (e.g., **If**, entitled "Finding Immortal Fallacies" and **O2**, entitled "Objectives of the Gods"), I began to show you some such "purposes", as proposed in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Mormonism. In the next chapter, I'll comment more about the purposes proposed in the religion in which you were indoctrinated. Here, to begin, I want you to consider the purposes proposed by the evangelical Christian Dr. Rick Warren in his best-selling book *The Purpose-Driven Life* – which has sold more than 20 million copies!!

Some of Warren's accolades² include the following:

- Called "America's most influential spiritual leader" and "America's Pastor".
- Named one of America's Top 25 Leaders in the October 31, 2005 issue of *U.S. News and World Report*.
- Selected by TIME magazine as 1) one of 15 World Leaders Who Mattered Most in 2004, and 2) one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World (2005).

The same site states "Rick Warren (born January 28, 1954) is a best-selling Christian author and founding and senior pastor of Saddleback Church, now one of the largest churches in the United States." All of Warren's "higher education" was at "theological institutions", leading to his "doctor of ministry".

Below, I'll show you just a little of the (huge!) amount of information that's available on the internet about Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Life*. And I do so in spite of the "rather nasty" Legal Notice given at <http://www.purposedrivenlife.com/legal.aspx>, which includes "all editorial

² Taken from http://www.biblio.com/authors/623/Rick_Warren_Biography.html#bio.

content and graphics on this site... may not be copied without the express permission of PurposeDrivenLife.com... which reserves all rights.”

My defiance of that “warning” is stimulated by three considerations: 1) The above Legal Notice states that I’m disallowed from copying it “all”, which causes me “no problem” – ‘cause I don’t plan to copy it “all” (☺), 2) My goal is to show you some serious problems with Warren’s ideas, and it’s rather difficult to do so if I don’t show you what his ideas are (☹), and 3) Rather than trust that PurposeDrivenLife.com would give me permission to quote so much (or even that they have the right to force me to request permission), I prefer to trust our legal system’s interpretation of the “fair-use clause” of U.S. copyright laws.

That said, I’ll now begin my quotations, all taken from various web pages that you can reach from the “home page” of PurposeDrivenLife.com at <http://www.purposedrivenlife.com/>.³ To start, the following is the website’s [glorious!] description of the book, to which I’ve added a couple of notes in “square brackets”:⁴

A groundbreaking manifesto on the meaning of life.

The most basic question everyone faces in life is Why am I here? What is my purpose? Self-help books suggest that people should look within, at their own desires and dreams, but Rick Warren says the starting place must be with God and his eternal purposes for each life. Real meaning and significance comes from understanding and fulfilling God’s purposes for putting us on earth [if only someone could figure that out!].

The Purpose-Driven Life takes the groundbreaking message of the award-winning Purpose-Driven Church [I wonder what an “award-winning... Church” is?! Who decides? What’s the “award”?] and goes deeper, applying it to the lifestyle of individual Christians. This book helps readers understand God’s incredible plan for their lives. Warren enables them to see the big picture of what life is all about and begin to live the life God created them to live.

The Purpose-Driven Life is a manifesto for Christian living in the 21st century... a lifestyle based on eternal purposes, not cultural values. Using biblical stories and

³ In particular, Dear, notice that the first seven chapters of Warren’s book are available on the web starting at <http://www.purposedrivenlife.com/samplechapters/index.aspx>. Also, although it’s no longer easy (on the website) to find the publisher of the book, the information can still be seen (barely!) on (photocopies?) of the title and copyright pages: Copyright 2002, 2004 by Rick Warren; Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI.

⁴ Copied from <http://www.purposedrivenlife.com/thebook.aspx>.

letting the Bible speak for itself, Warren clearly explains God's five purposes for each of us:

- We were planned for God's pleasure, so your first purpose is to offer real worship.
- We were formed for God's family, so your second purpose is to enjoy real fellowship.
- We were created to become like Christ, so your third purpose is to learn real discipleship.
- We were shaped for serving God, so your fourth purpose is to practice real ministry.
- We were made for a mission, so your fifth purpose is to live out real evangelism.

[Ain't it amazing, Dear, that following those five purposes would lead you to become just like Rick Warren! ☺] This long-anticipated book is the life-message of Rick Warren, founding pastor of Saddleback Church...

Some (stunning!) reviews of Warren's book include the following (which I couldn't find repeated in the current version of the referenced website).

This book will guide you to greatness – through living the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Make sure you're not missing the point of your life – read this book! (Billy and Franklin Graham)

I don't know about you, but questions like "What on earth am I here for?" and "What's it all about?" were the ones on my mind for years before I finally met my Maker – and thankful I didn't have to wait for the last minute to do it! Drawing upon his years in ministry with thousands of people, Rick has learned that these questions are basic to all of us, in every generation. And he offers answers in words and concepts that we all can understand. (Peggy Matthews-Rose, Christian Book Previews.com)

Destined to be a classic on the Christian life, I predict The Purpose-Driven™ Life will become the My Utmost for His Highest of the 21st century. Timeless, profound, compelling, and transforming, this book is a priceless gift for everyone who wants to know their purpose and fulfill their destiny. As The Purpose-Driven™ Church has had the most profound impact on the church worldwide of any book in this generation, Rick Warren's new, groundbreaking manifesto will set millions of people free to live the lives God intended for us on earth. This is the book we've all been waiting for! (Bruce Wilkinson, Author, *The Prayer of Jabez*)

If you only read one book on what life is all about – make it this one! Rick Warren is absolutely brilliant at explaining our real purpose in the world and making the complex understandable. Read this book, then give it to everyone you care about. It is life-changing. Believe me, you'll never be the same after reading this! What a gift! (Lee Strobel, Author, *The Case for Christ*)

So now, Dear, with that introduction out of the way, let me show you some details from Warren's book about what he proposes to be our purpose (or purposes) in life. The following quotations are from the copy of his book available at Warren's website.⁵ Once again, I've added a few comments in "square brackets", and in a few places, I've added some paragraph breaks (because sometimes my comments might otherwise distract you from seeing what Warren is proposing). The bold type and the italics are Warren's.

It All Starts With God

It's not about you.

[by Rick Warren]

The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. [Sorry, Dear, but at least according to Warren, your purpose is "far greater" than to be happy. You just think that... ☺] *It's far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born *by his purpose and for his purpose.** [And of course I, Dr. Rick Warren, doctor of Ministry, plan to show you all data supporting that assertion. ☺]

The search for the purpose of life has puzzled people for thousands of years. That's because we typically begin at the wrong starting point – ourselves. [Or maybe it's because we have been so thoroughly confused by the damnable clerics of the world and didn't appreciate the significance of evolution!]

We ask self-centered questions like, "What do I want to be? What should I do with my life? What are my goals, my ambitions, my dreams for my future?"

But focusing on ourselves will never reveal our life's purpose. The Bible says, "*It is God who directs the lives of his creatures; everyone's life is in his power.*" [And the relevance to what was written by some ancient fogeys, who thought the world was a flat plate and that some giant Jabberwock in the sky controlled the universe, is what?]

Contrary to what many popular books, movies, and seminars tell you, **you won't discover your life's meaning by looking within yourself.** [So, Dear, in contrast to what the psychologist Carl Jung said, viz., "*He who looks outside, dreams; he who looks within, awakens*" and in contrast to the advice from your grampa-with-the beard to hold "board meetings in your brain", you're not to listen to yourself; instead, you're to listen to Dr. Rick Warren. Oh, you don't know him? Well, he's the one

⁵ At <http://www.purposedrivenlife.com/samplechapters/index.aspx>. Incidentally, Dear, I don't guarantee that I caught all the changes in his book, between what was originally posted (I assume from the 2002 edition of the book – and which allowed me to "cut and paste") to what's now posted (I assume from the 2004 edition – and which can't be "cut and pasted"). But I tried to "update" what I had.

with the collection plate – and making millions telling dimwits how to dream away their lives!]

You've probably tried that already. You didn't create yourself, so there is no way you can tell yourself what you were created for! [Duh – I also didn't create your collection plate, but I have a pretty good idea about its purpose!]

If I handed you an invention you had never seen before, you wouldn't know its purpose, and the invention itself wouldn't be able to tell you either. Only the creator or the owner's manual could reveal its purpose. [So, Dear, don't you see: you're nothing but some dumb invention that's incapable of communicating. No, no, no – you've got it all wrong! You just think that you're thinking on your own. That's just all garbled jabberwocky. But not to worry, cause good old Dr. Rick Warren is about to translate all that jabberwocky – which you thought were your own thoughts. He'll show you what you should be thinking! Sorry, Dear, as you know, such stupidity really gets my cynical juices flowing.]

I once got lost in the mountains. When I stopped to ask for directions to the campsite, I was told, "*You can't get there from here. You must start from the other side of the mountain!*" In the same way, you cannot arrive at your life's purpose by starting with a focus on yourself. [So, don't you see, Dear? Even though Warren is twisting the meaning of an off-hand remark by someone on some mountain trail (a remark that meant, if it weren't a joke, something similar to: "Well, it sure would have been a lot better if you had started your trek on the other side of the mountain."), yet don't you see, there's no way to figure out the way to live your own life except by following Warren's directions? And yes, of course that includes paying him plenty to peddle his nonsense.]

You must begin with God, your Creator. [And exactly how did HE pull-off the stunt of creating me?] You exist only because God wills that you exist. [Ah hah! There you have it: he WILLED it! It's only the nasty biologists who say that your creation had anything to do with your parents having sex. Those blankety-blank biologists: they're all sex maniacs!]

You were made by God and for God – and until you understand that, life will never make sense. [And I'll never collect anything in my collection plate but cents!] It is only in God that we discover our origin, our identity, our meaning, our purpose, our significance, and our destiny. Every other path leads to a dead end. [Well, actually, unless you provide some evidence to the contrary, all data suggest that all paths lead to dead ends!]

Many people try to use God for their own self-actualization. They want God to be a personal "genie" who serves their self-centered desires. But that is a reversal of nature and is doomed to failure. [And now Warren claims that "nature" is on his side – and not to be reversed (e.g., like Sisyphus, pushing a rock up a hill, reversing nature's "desires")!]

You were made for God, not vice versa [cause, doncha know, God wants a cheering section] and **life is about letting God use you for *his* purposes, not your using him for your own purpose.** [Of course, you could dismiss all ideas about all gods as a bunch of silly speculations by savages – and try to figure out your purpose(s) by yourself – but if you do that, then who’s gonna buy my book!]

The Bible says [and doncha know, the Bible is the unvarnished “truth”, direct from the giant Jabberwock in the sky, HIMself, and not just some crazed writings of power-mongering clerics], *“Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life.”* [Provided, of course, you can figure out a way to be free while being a slave to the clerics’ God (i.e., to the clerics).]

I have read many books that suggest ways to discover the purpose of my life. All of them could be classified as “self-help” books because they approach the subject from a self-centered viewpoint. Self-help books usually offer the same predictable steps to finding your life’s purpose: Consider your dreams. Clarify your values. Set some goals. Figure out what you are good at. Aim high. Believe you can achieve it. Be disciplined. Never give up. [Sounds good to me!]

Of course, these recommendations are all good and often lead to great success. You can usually succeed in reaching a goal if you put your mind to it. **But being successful and fulfilling your life’s purpose are not at all the same issue!** [Well, doesn’t that rather depend? Suppose you defined your own purpose and then achieved it successfully. It then would seem that your statement is wrong. But, that’s just something for you (Warren) to think about – if you still know how!]

You could reach all your personal goals, becoming a raving success by the world’s standard, and *still* miss the purposes for which God created you. [On the other hand, suppose there is no god. Then...] You need more than self-help advice. Jesus Christ once said, *“Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self.”* [Dear: please be wary of anyone who preaches that “self-sacrifice is the way” – the next thing you know, they’ll be pushing a collection plate toward you!]

This booklet is not about finding the right career, achieving your dreams, or planning your life. It is not about how to cram more activities into an overloaded schedule. Actually, it will teach you how to do *less* in life – by focusing on what matters most. It is about becoming what God created you to be. [If only, but only, someone had a clue about what that is – or if HE is!]

How, then, do you discover the purpose you were created for? [Ah hah! Now we’re gonna get to the meat of it!] **You have only two options.** [Be damned! I got 7,984 options! Do you want me to innumerate them?!]

Your first option is *speculation*. This is where most people are. They just guess or speculate or theorize about the purpose of life. When people say, “I’ve always thought the purpose of life is . . . ,” they’re really saying, “This is the best guess I can come up with.”

For thousands of years, brilliant philosophers have discussed and speculated about the meaning of life. Philosophy is an important subject and has its uses, but when it comes to determining the purpose of life, even the wisest philosophers are just guessing... [The biologists, on the other hand...]

Fortunately, there is an alternative to speculation about the meaning and purpose of life. *The easiest way to discover the purpose of an invention is to ask the creator to explain it.* The same method works for discovering your life’s purpose. [No it doesn’t. I asked one of my creators, my mother, and she told me that the purpose was to serve some fictitious god! How’s that for stupidity?!]

You can find what God, your creator, has revealed about life in his Word, the Bible. *Revelation beats speculation any day.* [And have you considered what beats both, every second of every day, namely, the scientific method?!]

God has not left us in the dark to wonder and guess. [Except, of course, if you wonder about the possibility that the Bible was concocted by a bunch of con-artist clerics, averse to working for a living, and then, if you guess that anyone who says otherwise probably has a collection plate waiting to be filled!]

He has clearly revealed his five purposes for our lives through the Bible. It is our **Owner’s Manual** [Dear: if you come with an “owner’s manual”, then not only are you an automaton, you’re a slave!] explaining why we are alive, how life works, what to avoid, and what to expect in the future. It explains what no self-help or philosophy book could know. The Bible says, *“God’s wisdom... goes deep into the interior of his purposes... It’s not the latest message, but more like the oldest – what God determined as the way to bring out his best in us.”*

God is not just the starting point of your life; he is the source of it. [And that’s not just speculation, by gum, it’s “revealed wisdom” – revealed to a bunch of parasitic clerics, by still other parasitic clerics, how to fleece the people and thereby avoid working for a living!]

To discover your purpose in life you must turn to God’s Word, not the world’s best guesses. You must build your life on unchanging, eternal truths [but, unfortunately, in reality, such “unchanging, eternal truths” don’t exist; they exist only in closed systems, such as pure mathematics, the rule books for various games, in comic books and in similar “holy books”, concocted by comic-book and holy-book writers, dis-respectively!]....

The Bible says, *“It’s in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.”* This verse gives us three insights into your purpose.

First, you discover your identity and purpose through a relationship with Jesus Christ. If you don’t have such a relationship, I will later explain how to begin one.

Second, God was thinking of you long before you ever thought about him. His purpose for your life predates your conception. He planned it before you existed, without your input! You may choose your career, your spouse, your hobbies, and many other parts of your life, but you don’t get to choose your purpose.

Third, the purpose of your life fits into a much larger, cosmic purpose that God has designed for eternity. That [speculation!] is what this booklet is about...

Now, Dear, I’m getting awfully tired of going through this nonsense in so much detail – not least of which is the “pain” derived from the fact that (as I mentioned in an earlier footnote) the text that I’m using was from an earlier version of the website (which contained portions of the book in a form that permitted me to “cut and paste”), whereas what’s now posted at the website (which can’t be copied and pasted) appears to be from a later edition of Warren’s book. Consequently, I’ve had to try to ensure that I’ve incorporated all his corrections and revisions.

But more to the point, I’m tired of wading through all his “introductory verbiage / garbage”, and want to “get on with it” to show you specific claims for what people’s purposes are – according to God – or at least, according to the Bible – well, at least according to Warren. These claims follow, with page numbers and text as in the original edition of Warren’s book (as copied from his website a few years ago). And I want to keep these “originals”, because later in this chapter, I want to show you some criticisms of these “purposes” not by me – heaven forbid! – but by a cleric! Oh and also: later I’ll show you some criticism by another Humanist. The quotes from Warren’s book follow, with some notes of mine added in “square brackets”.

p. 25: *You weren’t put on Earth to be remembered. You were put here to prepare for eternity.* [And where did you say the data supporting that proposition were hidden?]

p. 29: *While life on Earth offers many choices, eternity offers only two choices: heaven or hell.* [How about the alternative of just being dead?!]

p. 29: When you fully comprehend that there is more to life than just here and now, and you realize that life is just preparation for eternity, you will begin to live differently on a daily basis. [Oh, I agree with that: you'll be living in a clerically-induced delusion!]

p. 29: If your time on Earth were all there is to your life, I would suggest you start living it up immediately. You could forget being good and ethical, and you wouldn't have to worry about any consequences of your actions. You could indulge yourself in total self-centeredness, because your actions would have no long-term repercussions. [Well, I'm sure glad that this suggestion of yours is worth no more than your other suggestions! As an alternative, how about becoming another, moral, Humanist?]

p. 29: But – *and this makes all the difference* – death is not the end of you! Death is not your termination, but our transition into eternity, so there are *eternal* consequences to everything you do on earth. Every act of our lives strikes some chord that will vibrate in eternity. [Oh, wow, that's neat! And you really have evidence to confirm this? I mean, it's not just another concoction of savages, now used by clerical con artists to fleece the public, is it?]

p. 32: If you have a relationship with God through Jesus, you don't need to fear death. It is the door to eternity. It will be the [last?] hour of your time on Earth, but it won't be the last of you. Rather than being the end of your life, it will be your birthday into eternal life. The Bible says, “**This world is not our home; we are looking forward to our everlasting home in heaven.**” [Ah hah! And who could possibly want more confirmation than that! It's “true”, because the Bible says so, and the Bible (or the Koran or the Book of Mormon) is obviously true, because it's the word of God, who can't lie – because it says so, right there in the Bible (or the Koran or the Book of Mormon). Any more stupid questions from hecklers?]

p. 35: The Bible offers three metaphors that teach us God's view of life: Life is a *test*, life is a *trust*, and life is a *temporary assignment*. These ideas are the foundation of purpose-driven living. [And what a shaky foundation it is! It's led to the ruin of billions of people! It's the foundation of the lives of so many people now confined to mental institutions. In fact, while that comes to mind, have you considered...]

p. 36: Character is both developed and revealed by tests, and *all* of life is a test. **You are always being tested.** [No wonder religious people are so uptight!] God constantly watches your response to people, problems, success, conflict, illness, disappointment, and even the weather! [But, but, but... how come he had to come down to look at the Tower of Babel and to see what was going on in Sodom? Something does not compute!] He even watches the simplest actions such as when you open a door for others, when you pick up a piece of trash, or when you're polite toward a clerk or waitress. [Oh yes, of course, he also watches you in the bedroom and the bathroom. But don't go calling him a peeping Tom! You won't get away with that, either, you...!]

p. 37: **When you understand that life is a test, you realize that *nothing is insignificant in your life.*** Even the smallest incident has significance. [And another way to drive yourself crazy is... Ah well, never mind, what's proposed is already more than enough.]

p. 38: **Life on Earth is a Trust.** This is the second metaphor of life we find in the Bible. Our time, energy, intelligence, opportunities, relationships, and resources are all gifts that God has entrusted to our care and management. We are stewards, or managers, of whatever God gives us. This concept of stewardship begins with the recognition that God is the owner of everything and everyone on Earth. The Bible says, **“The world and all that is in it belong to the Lord; the Earth and all who live on it are his.”** [And if you want to know what it's like to be a slave, then realize...]

p. 42: Life on Earth is a temporary assignment... God says that his children are to think differently about life from the way unbelievers do. **“All they think about is this life here on Earth. But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives.”** Real believers realize that there will be far more to life than just the few years we live on this planet. [They “realize” this? Hmmm. How did they come to this realization? Oh, I see: brainwashed as children and conned by clerics to “realize”...]

p. 45: Only as we realize that life is a test, a trust, and a temporary assignment in preparation for eternity will the appeal of these good but secondary things lose their grip on our lives. We are preparing for something even better! **“The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever.”** [That's what I've been saying all along! Those invisible flying pink elephants will live forever! How come nobody “believes” me! Boy: just wait until the giant Jabberwock in the sky gets his trunk hooked around them. They'll be sorry. Long live the invisible flying pink elephants!]

p. 46: Realizing that life on Earth is just a temporary assignment would radically alter your values. Eternal values, not temporal ones, should become the deciding factors your decisions. As C.S. Lewis observed, **“All that is not eternal is eternally useless.”** [And given that nothing is known to be ‘eternal’, then that means... Duh.] The Bible says, **“We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”** [That's exactly right! Exactly because you can't see invisible pink elephants (why else do you think they're called ‘invisible’, ☹) proves they're eternal!]

p. 49: **The Reason for Everything.** It's all for God. Not only were you created *by* God; you were created *for* him, too. The ultimate goal of the universe is to show the glory of God. [Oh great: now we have even a goal for the universe!] It is the reason for everything that exists, including you. God made it *all* for his glory. Without God's glory, there would be nothing. [And don't listen to your silly old grandfather-with-the-beard when he says that ‘nothing’ is actually what's here! Why do you think he's called ‘silly’?]

p. 51: The book *The Purpose-Driven Life* explains in detail how to fulfill God's five purposes for your life. I hope you will obtain a copy and read it. But here is a summarized overview of those five purposes:

1. You bring God glory by getting to know and love him...
2. You bring God glory by learning to love other people in God's family...
3. You bring God glory by becoming like Christ...
4. You bring God glory by serving others...
5. You bring God glory by telling others about him...

[And don't listen to those naysayers who say there is no god, there never was, that it's all silly speculations by savages. I mean, if they're so right, how come they're broke and we clerics are rolling in dough? Why, if I made only \$1 per copy of this book (rather than \$10), then I'd have more than \$20 million dollars. Meanwhile, look at your old grandfather-with-the-beard: he's damn near broke and he has to pay a website host to post his book, unable to collect even a penny for it! Ha! That's gotta prove something!]

Okay, Dear, in case you didn't get the impression on your own: that's about all the stupidity from Warren I can tolerate. Now, I'll move on to what others have to say about his book, starting with comments by another cleric – perhaps feeling the competition in his group's collection plates! In particular, the following text is from a website established by the Fundamental Evangelistic Association.⁶ Associated with the text are the following introductory and copyright statements.

This resource has been made available for your use in reaching lost souls with the one pure, true and precious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. All scriptural references and quotes are based on the King James Version (AV1611) only. The materials provided are copyrighted and are so indicated; however, you have permission to make copies for your personal use provided proper reference to the author is maintained and the content is not changed. You have permission to link to these materials; however we ask that you do not post these materials on your website or BBS. We encourage you to reach out to all who haven't heard the Gospel, that precious lost souls will be saved for Christ and for His glory!

Whatever! I'm not going to reproduce all of it here, because it goes on and on and on. Nonetheless, please consider the following, to try to get at least some "inkling" of where the author (Matt Costella) is "coming from". Also, although originally I wasn't intending to, I've added a few notes in "square brackets" – when the level of stupidity in the article fell below my tolerance.

⁶ At <http://www.fundamentalbiblechurch.org/Foundation/fbcAnalysis.htm>.

In addition, when it seemed that my notes interrupted the flow of Costella's text too much, I've again added some paragraph breaks after my notes.

An Analysis of Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven® Life* by Matt Costella

Special Notice: This is copyrighted material. In fairness to those who subscribe to FOUNDATION Magazine, there is usually a significant delay between publication and posting on the Internet. Furthermore, not all FOUNDATION articles are posted on the website. This article is an exception because of the urgent need to alert the unsuspecting of programs that are sweeping through the churches and depart from the Biblical blueprint for Christian living and ministry...

Rick Warren, renowned pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, and chief architect of the Purpose-Driven® ministry empire [empire?!], has influenced thousands of pastors and Christian leaders around the world with his best-selling book *The Purpose-Driven-Church* and his Purpose-Driven® church growth seminars. Now, Warren has targeted the Christian layperson with his latest *New York Times* bestseller, *The Purpose-Driven® Life* (Zondervan, 2002). Millions of people have purchased *The Purpose-Driven® Life* since its release in September 2002, and tens of thousands of churches have either used or are currently using this book and other Purpose-Driven® materials during special campaigns called 40 Days of Purpose. The object of the book, which is divided into 40 chapters, is to explain in 40 days the five purposes of one's life.

Bruce Ryskamp, president and CEO of Zondervan Publishing, said *The Purpose-Driven® Life* "is more than a bestseller, it's become a movement." According to Warren himself, *The Purpose-Driven® Life* is more than just a book – it is, in Warren's own words, "a guide to a 40-day spiritual journey" (p. 9). Because Warren is admittedly leading people on a spiritual journey – a serious task with profound implications – believers must carefully analyze and critique the spiritual content of this journey. Nothing on earth is more important than understanding the true will of God [cough] as revealed to mankind in His Word, the Bible [cough, cough]. Therefore, any Christian book or "spiritual journey" designed to lead people to a closer relationship with God must conform to the truth [The "truth", no less! Happiness is knowing "the truth"! The truth is that Superman is weakened by kryptonite, that if the rules of logic aren't violated, then $1 + 1 = 2$, and in the game of chess... But, Dear, as I've shown you a little in earlier chapters and will show you in more detail in chapter **R** (dealing with Reason), **S** (dealing with Science), and **T** (dealing with "Truth") the word "truth" is a meaningless concept in the real world!] – no room for error is allowed! [Dear: if there's "no room for error" in any enterprise, (from going for a walk to going to Mars), then don't take the trip!]

The purpose of this article is to analyze this particular "spiritual journey" – *The Purpose-Driven® Life* – in order to determine whether or not it is, in fact, true and faithful to the Word and will of God [as given in the Hindu's *Vedas*... whoops, I mean as given in the Hindu's *Upanishads*... whoops, I mean as given in the Zoroastrian's *Zend-Avesta*... whoops, I mean as given in the Jewish *Tanakh*...

whoops, I mean as given in Paul’s *Epistles*... whoops, I mean as given in at least one of the *Synoptic Gospels* of the New Testament... whoops, I mean as given in the Gnostics’ *Gospels*... whoops, I mean as given in the *Koran*... whoops, I mean as given in the *Book of Mormon*... whoops, I mean as given wherever the “Word and will of God” might be found. Does anyone know where it is? In fact, does anyone know if God is?!

Rick Warren is undoubtedly a sincere and personable Christian leader, and his book is full of important, practical truths – truths [cough, cough] that present-day believers often tend to ignore or forget. For example, Warren effectively reminds believers that time on earth is short and our fruitfulness now will count for eternity. [As in $1 + 0 = 0$, because if you blow this one life by chasing a nothing called “eternity”, then your whole life amounts to zero!] He also emphasizes the importance of humility and servanthood in the life of the believer –something many Biblical fundamentalists today should take to heart. [Because, doncha know, God wants servants, aka slaves.] He also effectively addresses the reality of temptation and the means to spiritual victory over temptation. However, despite the many positive aspects of the book, one must remember that Warren is guiding millions of people on a spiritual journey. Therefore, any error must be exposed and addressed in light of the teachings of Scripture. [“Scripture”, no less – I guess that means Euclid’s *Elements of Geometry* or Morse and Feshbach’s *Methods of Theoretical Physics* or...?]

Many books written by evangelical writers – and even a few written by theological liberals – contain a wealth of applicable (and even Biblical) truths [cough, cough]. Almost every book has its positive qualities and a measure of truth to some degree [of course including Superman comic books!]. Nevertheless, the discerning believer and the Bible-centered church must ascertain whether any error is present and then take the appropriate action. Even a small amount of error can produce disastrous results in the lives of men, women and children. [Would that all “believers” would consider that statement carefully!]

Even before opening the book to analyze the content of this spiritual journey, the discerning believer will question the doctrinal soundness and spiritual integrity of the book when confronted with the theologically diverse list of denominations and churches that have publicly endorsed the book and hosted a 40 Days of Purpose campaign... [A list is provide, here, but I’ll omit it.] In order for the book to have such strong appeal among such a theologically diverse spectrum of churches and denominations, its content must not pose a threat to the teachings of these churches and denominations. Likewise, the book must either keep silent regarding the dangers of erroneous doctrine [Dear: ya gotta watch out for “erroneous doctrine”!] or minimize the importance of doctrinal differences altogether. Immediately, one should seriously question whether or not the same spiritual journey embraced by a Seventh-Day Adventist, Nazarene or United Methodist is a spiritual journey that is faithful to God’s Word and, therefore, worthy of his use. [What drive! What accusations!]

From the beginning, *The Purpose-Driven® Life* and the 40 Days of Purpose campaigns have been designed for ecumenical appeal. In promotional material, Warren writes, “We’re all on the same team!” He continues:

“This campaign is all about the Kingdom of God, fulfilling his agenda in His world. Nothing brings more glory to God than having his churches, small groups, and his people fulfilling His Purposes. Because 40 Days of Purpose is about God’s Kingdom, it is much bigger than any individual, church or denomination. We must work together ‘to serve God’s purpose in our generation.’ (Acts. 13:36). I hope and pray that your church won’t miss out on this movement of God. I invite you to join us. We’re waiting to partner with you on the journey of a lifetime!”

With these introductory thoughts in mind, an analysis of the content of the book is in order. As already noted, much of *The Purpose-Driven® Life* is Scriptural and helpful. Yet several serious problems exist with the book that should cause any believer to consider whether or not this is a trustworthy spiritual journey consistent with the Word and will of God. The following problems cannot be ignored: [Dear: I’m not going to go through all these (because they go on and on), but let me show you a little, from which you’ll probably catch the general “drift” of his argument.]

Problem #1: Sloppy Hermeneutics (Interpretation of Scripture)

For any true believer [happiness is being a “true believer”] embarking on a “spiritual journey,” nothing is more foundational, and thus important, than properly understanding the Word of God, for God’s Word alone provides the believer with inerrant [no less than “inerrant”!] instruction for Christ-honoring Christian living. In other words, how to properly understand and interpret Scripture is a vital part of one’s “spiritual journey.” [Oh? Why is interpretation needed? Couldn’t God state, clearly, “No driving on the left-hand side of the road!”? Meanwhile, there are all those crazy Aussies and Brits. I tell ya’, sure as hell they’re all headed for hell! That’s why they have so many traffic accidents! God’s watchin’, doncha know...]

Promotional material for *The Purpose-Driven® Life* and the 40 Days of Purpose campaigns frequently stresses the Biblical nature of the program, for Warren cites over 1,200 Scripture verses in his book. Yet *The Purpose-Driven® Life* is seriously flawed, hermeneutically speaking [try doing that!] in three ways: First, Warren completely misinterprets and misapplies certain texts; second, Warren presupposes his own ideas and beliefs and then “proof-texts” his points rather than exegeting [there’s a word that’ll get you scurrying to your dictionary!] the Scriptural text in order to discover its true meaning; and third, several paraphrases and translations used by Warren may prove his points, but they fail to relate even remotely [give?] the true meaning of the underlying Greek or Hebrew text. Notice several quotes from *The Purpose-Driven® Life* which demonstrate Warren’s misuse and misapplication of certain Biblical texts:

- “But [God] wanted to make you in order to express his love. God says, ‘I have carried you since you were born; I have taken care of you from your birth. Even when you are old, I will be the same. Even when your hair has turned gray, I will take care of you. I made you and will take care of you.’” (p. 25) According to Warren, this verse, taken from *Isaiah 46:3-4* of the New Century Version proves that God wanted to create mankind in order to express His love. Yet this is God’s message to Israel, not to mankind in general nor to believers in the church today. Warren is clearly misinterpreting and misrepresenting the true meaning of the text as the Israelites – the original recipients of this verse – understood it.
- “Wonderful changes are going to happen in your life as you begin to live it on purpose. God says, ‘I know what I am planning for you... I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future.’” (p. 31) Warren cites this text (*Jeremiah 29:11* from the New Century Version) several times in his book, but this verse is not informing the believer that wonderful changes will happen in his life once he lives out his purpose, as Warren would have one to believe. This text contains God’s personal message to the Israelites who were enduring the Babylonian captivity.
- “You may have been unaware that God holds you responsible for the unbelievers who live around you. The Bible says, ‘You must warn them so they may live. If you don’t speak out to warn the wicked to stop their evil ways, they will die in their sin. But I will hold you responsible for their death.’” (p. 283) Warren’s claim that God holds believers responsible for the death of unbelieving friends, neighbors and acquaintances is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Warren attempts to find justification for his statement by quoting *Ezekiel 3:18* in the New Century Version. However, in this text, God is directly speaking to a prophet – Ezekiel – to whom God had given a particular, unique task of communicating His Word. Using *Ezekiel 3:18*, Warren gives the reader the impression that if the friend, neighbor or acquaintance of a believer dies in unbelief, the believer is at fault! Of course, personal evangelism is vitally important to the spiritual life of every Christian [cause, doncha know, it’s a great way for the clerics to keep their con game going!], but the believer is not held responsible for the unbeliever’s condemnation.
- “For instance, the apostle Paul almost single-handedly spread Christianity throughout the Roman Empire. His secret was a focused life. He said, ‘I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead...’ (p. 32) This quote is an example of how Warren intentionally seeks out a particular translation of Scripture to support his point, even though no other translation lends any support or credence to the one used by Warren. This quote from *Philippians 3:13* of the New Living Translation may prove Warren’s point – that “knowing your purpose focuses your life” – but it does not accurately relay Paul’s words. Paul did look ahead rather than dwell on the past, but he did not “focus all [his] energies” on doing so. The New Living Translation takes great liberty in adding to the true meaning of the text and, thus,

portrays the apostle as one whose entire energies were devoted to focusing on the future rather than fulfilling the glory of God through faithful obedience to Him [just as any good slave would do ☺].

- “Jesus will not return until everyone God wants to hear the Good News has heard it. Jesus said, ‘**The Good News about God’s kingdom will be preached in all the world, to every nation. Then the end will come**’ ...” (p. 286) This text, taken from *Matthew 24:14* of the New Century Version, is not describing the prerequisites for Christ’s imminent return for His church at the rapture. Within the context, Jesus is referring to the period of time during the seven-year tribulation prior to His return to the earth to inaugurate His millennial kingdom. [And he WILL return! “It’s in the book!” {Dear, you really should listen to the ~60 year old record that, so frequently, repeats the phrase “It’s in the book!”}] At that time, the Gospel will be preached – by natural and supernatural means – to the entire world. Then, Christ will return with His saints to judge the nations and rule and reign on the earth. [And everyone knows that’s “true”, cause “It’s in the book!”]
- “That God would want me for a close friend is hard to understand, but the Bible says, ‘**He is a God who is passionate about his relationship with you**’.” (p. 86) In this text, God is not saying He wants Rick Warren – or any other believer in the church age – “for a close friend.” This verse, which Warren quotes from *Exodus 34:14* of the New Living Translation, actually contains God’s words to Moses in which the Lord declared, “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God.” (KJV) Of course [☺] God desires our praise and worship and even our friendship, but for Warren to use this text as a support for his statement that God wants him – or any of us – for a friend is a misrepresentation of the clear meaning of the text. [I mean, what slave master truly “wants” one of his slaves to be a friend?!]
- “One of the ways God measures spiritual maturity is by the quality of your relationships. In heaven God won’t say, ‘Tell me about your career, your bank account, and your hobbies.’ Instead he will review how you treated other people, particularly those in need (*Mt. 25: 34-46*). Jesus said the way to love him is to love his family and care for their practical needs: ‘**Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me**’ ...” (p. 126) This text, taken from *Matthew 25:40* of the New Revised Standard Version, refers to the judgment of the nations which will occur following Christ’s return to earth prior to the establishment of His kingdom. The text does not refer to the manner in which believers are to treat people on the earth today. [Oh? Well I hope that somewhere it says something similar!] Rather, it details how the believing Gentiles during the time of the Tribulation will treat the believing Jews who will suffer for the cause of Christ.
- “In fact, the Bible tells us that God has given us the ministry of restoring relationships (*2 Corinthians 5:18*, God’s Word Translation)... As believers, God

has ‘called us to settle our relationships with each other.’ (2 Corinthians 5:18, The Message).” (pp. 152, 154) Both translations of 2 Corinthians 5:18 may support the point Warren is trying to make – that believers should strive to be peacemakers who restore broken relationships with one another – but both translations have destroyed the true meaning of the text as revealed by the context. *Second Corinthians 5:18* does not refer to relationships between individuals but to relationships between individuals and God. The Lord has given Christians the “ministry of reconciliation” (v. 18) and the “word of reconciliation” (v. 19) as “ambassadors for Christ” (v. 20) to declare that unbelievers can be reconciled to God through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ (vv. 17-21). To use this text as a Biblical support for relationship restoration between individuals is to grossly misinterpret and misapply the Word of God.

It is evident that, in many instances, Warren has formulated his own thoughts and ideas and then attempted to find verses or phrases of Scripture to support his presuppositions. Clearly, anyone can cite portions of Scripture to support almost any point they desire to make [Wow! If correct, that doesn’t say much for the usefulness of “Scripture”!], but Christians who are interested in discovering what the Bible truly says and means must never take such an approach. Rather, they must carefully read the Bible and understand each phrase and each verse in its proper context (local and remote) and determine how such texts relate to all other teachings of Scripture. [And of course, should they have difficulty doing that – as obviously they will, because even a “doctor of ministry” has difficulty (at least according to Costella) – then the fellows with the collection plates will be glad to...!]

Dear: that’s all of Costella’s nonsense I can take! You decide for yourself how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. Meanwhile, Dear, please realize that all the above was for just Costella’s first problem with Warren’s book. The rest of Costella’s criticism goes on for 14 more pages! Finally he gets to the following conclusion:

The Purpose-Driven® Life may contain some helpful, Biblical truths [cough, cough], but it cannot be trusted to lead a believer on a spiritual journey that is completely true and faithful to the Word and will of God. Why? [Because only we good guys... ; sorry, Dear] Because Warren often misinterprets Scripture to his own advantage, conjoins untrustworthy, humanistic psychological principles [how’s that for an oxymoronic conjunction of adjectives: “untrustworthy, humanistic (psychological principles)!] with Biblical truths [cough, cough], minimizes the importance of sound doctrine, deems holiness and biblical separation as less important than love and unity, refers to enemies of the faith as positive contributors to one’s spiritual journey and promotes his entire Purpose-Driven® program. For these and other reasons, believers cannot trust *The Purpose-Driven® Life* and churches should refrain from participating in the 40 Days of Purpose campaigns. [Besides: we’re losing customers!]

Through formulating his own outline and principles for Christian living and subsequently “proof texting” his presuppositions by finding Scripture texts and translations that coincide with his ideas and philosophy of Christian living, Warren has effectively laid out a blueprint for Christian living consistent with what he thinks a Christian should be but not a blueprint reflecting what God desires of the believer. In other words, a believer who embarks on a spiritual journey and uses *The Purpose-Driven® Life* as a guide may become the type of Christian Rick Warren wants him to become, but he will not become the type of Christian [that our group of con artists wants them to become... Whoops, that just sorta slipped in...] God desires him to become – a Christian dedicated to the whole counsel of God and to faithful obedience and holy living. [Happiness is being “holy” and “obedient” – to our clerics!]

Any time a Christian leader minimizes the importance of doctrine and sound Biblical interpretation, he can make the Bible say whatever he wants it to say. [There’s that same theme again. Surely it should make all readers pause to think!] At that point, no one can argue or disagree with his interpretation because interpretation has become relative and irrelevant. [Well, as a matter of fact, what interpretations aren’t “relative and irrelevant” if no data support the interpretations!] Warren specifically tells the reader that focusing on “Interpretations” of Scripture results in division. (p. 162) Therefore, any criticism leveled at *The Purpose-Driven® Life* for faulty interpretation of Scripture will be labeled “divisive.” Yet, interpretation and doctrine are important and must be a central part of anyone’s spiritual journey [for otherwise, how will we clerics be able to continue to fleece the public?!].

At the end of his book, Warren tells the reader, “In this book I have passed on to you what others taught me about the purpose of life; now it’s your duty to pass that on to others.” (p. 309) Warren admits that his book contains “what others taught [him] about the purpose of life” and then urges believers to propagate his discoveries. Yet believers must disciple others in the faithful teachings of the Word of God – not Rick Warren. Believers must heed and proclaim the words of the New Testament apostles and prophets who penned the words of Scripture and commanded believers to “teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2) and to “stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our (the apostles’) epistle” (2 Thess. 2:15). The Word of God is sufficient to equip the believer “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Yes, the Bible is sufficient, and yes, God does use pastors and teachers to train and disciple believers in the truths of Scripture, but *The Purpose-Driven® Life* is not consistently faithful to God’s Word and therefore must be rejected by serious, discerning believers.

If you want to read more such stuff from other Christian clerics, Dear, then search on the internet. One is at <http://www.biblebb.com/files/pdflaw.htm>. But I wanna move on!

In particular, I very much want you to consider the following comments by whoever is the creator of the text at the tremendous website “Why Won’t God Heal Amputees.” In particular, as one of a large number of the excellent and compelling analyses at that website, what follows is the unknown author’s comments on Warren’s book.

Why Won’t God Heal Amputees⁷ [Author not identified]

Understanding God’s Plan

If you are a Christian, you are extremely familiar with “God’s plan.” This is the way that Christians traditionally explain things like amputations, cancer, hurricanes and car accidents.

You can see how pervasive “God’s plan” is by looking in Christian inspirational literature. For example, if we look in the book *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren, we find this remarkable paragraph in Chapter 2:

Because God made you for a reason, he also decided *when* you would be born and *how long* you would live. He planned the days of your life in advance, choosing the exact time of your birth and death. The Bible says, “**You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book!**” [Psalm 139:16]

There is also this:

Regardless of the circumstances of your birth or who your parents are, God had a plan in creating you.

Under this view of the universe, God plans everything.

Take a moment and think about what Rick Warren said. Rick said, “He planned the days of your life in advance, choosing the exact time of your birth and death.” Let’s examine one simple implication of this statement. What this means is that God pre-planned every abortion that has taken place on our planet.

If you think about this implication for a few moments, you will begin to realize how impossible “God’s plan” is. If the concept of “God’s plan” is true, you can first of all see that God wants us to be aborting children. Every single abortion is planned by God; so, God must be doing it for a reason. Second, you can see that both the mother who requests the abortion and the doctor who performs it are blameless. Since it is

⁷ Copied from <http://whywontgodhealamputees.com/gods-plan.htm>. The webpage includes “© Copyright 2006, All rights reserved” – but, Dear, I ain’t the least worried that I’ll be sued – ‘cause whoever the author is, clearly he (or she) is another Humanist.

God who planned the abortion of the child (God chose the “exact time” of the death, according to Rick Warren), the mother and doctor are simply puppets who are fulfilling God’s plan. You can also see that all the Christians who are fighting against abortion are missing the point. They are actually fighting against God’s plan, and their fight is completely futile. God is the all-powerful ruler of the universe, and his plan is for more than a million children a year to die in the United States through abortion... Each one of those abortions was meticulously planned by God, so fighting against abortion is a totally wasted effort.

If you are a Christian, what you are thinking is, “God does not intend for us to perform abortions!” But if you believe what Rick is saying, then you are obviously incorrect. God is actually the direct cause of every abortion on earth. If you find that notion to be uncomfortable, I would agree with you. Unfortunately, that is the logical outcome of God’s plan.

In order to better understand God’s plan, let’s look at one of the biggest global events that humans have ever witnessed: World War II. According to *Encarta*:

The human cost [of WWII], not including between 5.6 million and 5.9 million Jews killed in the Holocaust who were indirect victims of the war, is estimated to have been 55 million dead – 25 million of those military and 30 million civilian.

In addition, according to *Encarta*:

61 countries participated in WWII
1.7 billion people participated in WWII
75% of all human beings alive at the time participated in WWII

World War II was obviously a major disaster – perhaps the most horrific event the world has ever seen. It is safe to say that nearly every human being on planet Earth prayed to God that this war would end.

And don’t forget Adolph Hitler. He was evil incarnate, and Hitler is well known for the atrocious things he did. It is interesting to look at Adolph Hitler in the context of prayer, and understand how Christians try to reconcile an all-loving, prayer-answering God with such a hateful man.

What I would like you to do, right now, is to consider this statement: “Hitler is part of God’s Plan.” Think about what Rick said:

He planned the days of your life in advance, choosing the exact time of your birth and death. The Bible says, “**You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book!**” [Psalm 139:16]

Rick also says:

God never does anything accidentally, and he never makes mistakes. He has a reason for everything he creates. Every plant and every animal was planned by God, and every person was designed with a purpose in mind.

If God has a divine plan for each of us, then he had a divine plan for Hitler too. It is when you stop to think about it deeply that the contradictions hit you.

For example, simply think about what “God’s plan” would actually mean. Since God is an all-powerful being, God’s plan would, of necessity, need to be all-inclusive. Hitler and WWII would fit as one tiny piece in a supreme plan of massive proportions. Under an all-encompassing plan like this, the 60 million people who died in WWII all died for specific reasons – each death had meaning – and each death would have rippled through the world causing countless side-effects, also all part of God’s plan. God’s master plan would include everyone and everything, including Hitler and WWII.

Now let’s imagine that you say a prayer in this sort of universe. What difference does it make? God has his plan, and that plan is running down its track like a freight train. If God has a plan, then everyone who died in the Holocaust died for a reason. They had to die, and each death had meaning. Therefore, Holocaust victims could pray all day, and they would still die. The idea of a “plan” makes the idea of a “prayer-answering relationship with God” ridiculous. Yet Christians [and similarly, Dear, Muslims and Mormons and...] attach themselves to both ideas, despite the irresolvable contradiction.

Think about what God’s plan means for you personally. If the plan happens to say that you will get hit by a bus tomorrow, or that terrorists will blow you up, or that you will be shot in the head four times, then that’s what will happen. It would be the same with any disease. If you contract cancer this afternoon and die three months later, that is God’s plan for you. Praying to cure the cancer is a waste. God plans for you to die, so you will die. He has pre-programmed the exact time of your death. There is nothing you can do to change the plan – no amount of prayer will help – because your death will have meaning and your death will cause side-effects that are also part of the plan.

Who will you marry? You actually have no choice in the matter. God has pre-planned your wedding in minute detail. Rick Warren says, “God knew that those two individuals [your parents] possessed *exactly* the right genetic makeup to create the custom ‘you’ that he had in mind. They had the DNA God wanted to make you.” Therefore, your spouse was pre-chosen by God for you so that you would create the children who are a part of his plan. You also have no choice in the number of children you will have – God has pre-planned their births.

In addition, this sort of universe means that Hitler is blameless. Hitler was not “evil,” because Hitler had no free will at all. Hitler was simply an actor forced to play his

role in God's plan. God planned for millions of people to die in the Holocaust – he planned their deaths in exact detail according to Rick Warren. Hitler had to kill those people. Hitler was God's puppet in making that those millions of deaths happen right on schedule.

In the same way then, every murderer is blameless. Since God has planned each of our deaths in exact detail, murderers are actually essential to God's plan. Why do we punish them? We should be rewarding them for doing their God-planned duty. What if you get raped tomorrow and get pregnant? God did that because he planned the exact time of that child's birth and death. God actually pre-planned your rape, and the rapist was God's puppet. Rather than hating the rapist, we should celebrate God's plan.

Do you believe that murderers and rapists should be rewarded? Do you believe that Hitler was sent by God to kill millions of people in the Holocaust? Do you believe that God is the direct cause of every abortion on this planet? Do you believe that you have no choice in your spouse or the number of children you have? If you are a sane individual, then probably not. But that is what you are saying when you state that Hitler or cancer or anything else is part of "God's plan."

The statement "It is part of God's plan" is one of those meaningless palliatives that, when you sit down and think it through using your common sense, makes no sense.

Understanding the illusion of religion

If you are a Christian, you have probably believed in God's plan your whole life. There's a very good chance that you own a copy of Rick's book – it has sold over 20 million copies. Chances are you read Chapter 2 of Rick's book and nodded your head "Yes!" through the whole thing.

But now, if you are a normal, intelligent human being, you can see that what Rick proposes is impossible. If God has "planned the days of your life in advance, choosing the exact time of your birth and death", what that means is that you have absolutely no free will. Humans have no control over anything. We are simply puppets executing the plan. It also means that prayer is absolutely pointless.

So, on the one hand, you have a religion that says, "God has planned the days of your life in advance." On the other hand, that same religion says, "Pray to God and he will answer your prayers." One of those two statements *must* be false. In fact, both of them are wrong.

Now, Dear, please don't think such stupidity is confined to Christianity. Similar is found in all organized religions. I've already shown you similar nonsense in Mormonism (and will show you more in the next chapter), but here – to introduce the final important quotation that I would like you to read – let me show you a little about the similar (and rampant) idiocy in Islam.

The following (available on the internet) is “Taken from *An Introduction to Islam* [by] Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, Muhammadi Islamic Center, Canada, 1992/1412”; I’ve added a couple of notes in “square brackets”.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

An Introduction to Islam
[by Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi]

What is Islam? Islam is a religion which guides its followers in every aspect of their lives. It is a **way of life**.

Islam is the modern or latest version of the message sent by God through Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Islam was sent to mankind through Prophet Muhammad. Islam is “modern” in the sense that it has come to complement the teachings which were introduced through Moses and Jesus.

Islam is a religion which seeks to give a meaningful purpose [A “meaningful” purpose? Is there some other kind?] to our life on this earth. It seeks to guide us in fulfilling that purpose by creating harmony between ourselves, our Creator and fellow human beings.

What you will read below are some of the basic features of Islam...

The Purpose of Life

Our life on this earth has a specific purpose; it is not the result of nature’s accident, nor is it a punishment for eating the fruit of the forbidden tree. We are here according to God’s plan: the worldly life is a test [So sharpen up your pencils, kids, cause doncha know there’s another test coming. And the first test question is: Explain what the American science-fiction writer Frank Herbert (1920 – 1986) meant by, “Life isn’t a problem to solve, but a reality to be experienced.”]; it is a chance to **prove ourselves as deserving of the eternal blissful life in the hereafter**.

God did not create us just for few years of this life. To be created just for this world’s life would amount to a joke played by the Creator with the human species. [Either that, of course, or the theory of evolution is correct!] Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, said, “**You have not been created to perish; on the contrary, you have been created for eternal life.**” [And he knew that Darwin would be wrong!]

According to Islam, the final destination of mankind is the life hereafter. At the end of time, all human beings will be resurrected and will be held accountable for their worldly life. The life in hereafter will be an eternal life. However, whether it will be blissful or full of sorrow depends on how we spend our present life. [And the second exam question is: To the sentences in the paragraph you just finished reading, apply Herbert’s, “**When you believe something is right or wrong, true or false, you believe**

the assumptions in the words which express the arguments. Such assumptions are often full of holes, but remain most precious to the convinced.”]

It was to help mankind in achieving this objective that God sent various prophets and messengers to guide them. Muhammad is the last prophet, and Islam is the final and complete version of God’s message... [And the third and final question of the exam is to explain the following quotation, again from Frank Herbert: “Religion is the emulation of the adult by the child. Religion is the encystment of past beliefs: mythology, which is guesswork, the assumptions of trust in the universe, those pronouncements which men have made in search of personal power, all of it mingled with shreds of enlightenment. And always the ultimate unspoken commandment is ‘Thou shalt not question!’ But we question. We break that commandment as a matter of course. The work to which we have set ourselves is the liberating of the imagination, the harnessing of imagination to humankind’s deepest sense of creativity.”]

Anyway, Dear, similar silliness about the purpose of life proposed in Islam is given in the following. It was recently written by Muhammad Kamil Ahmad of Madeenah [Madina], Saudi Arabia, and posted at the Islamic Board Forum.⁸ In the “paste job” that follows, again I’ve added a few notes in “square brackets”.

[Purpose of life as proposed by Muhammad Kamil Ahmad]

All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and may the peace and blessings be upon his trustworthy Messenger Muhammad (SAW), and as to what follows:

The age we live in today is an age in which our lives are controlled by the world we live in, in which time passes by without us [our] even noticing. As a result of this, most people have little time to stop and think about the most fundamental of issues surrounding the very essence of their existence, including many Muslims, especially those who inherited Islam from their parents, and so you find that they have taken their religion for granted, all they know is that they carry the identity of Islam because their parents carried that identity without really trying to understand the true reality of why they were brought into this world in the first place. They fail to realize the true nature of their existence. So even though most of them know [cough] that Allah exists and that we are a product of His creation [cough, cough], they often forget to remember that we were created for a specific purpose.

If ten of us try to find out what our purpose is on our own, without considering the Revelation, we might find ten different purposes. This is because most people are confused and they don’t really know [Well, that’s the usual meaning of “confused”!],

⁸ At <http://www.islamicboard.com/comparative-religion/38631-purpose-behind-our-existence.html>; the original was posted on 3 March 2007 at <http://m-kamil-ahmad.blogspot.com/>.

and rather than to say “I don’t know” they just offer an answer. Think about it: Is our purpose in this life simply to eat, sleep, work, acquire some material things and enjoy ourselves? Is this our purpose? Why were we born? What is the object of our existence, and what is the wisdom behind the creation of man and this universe?

Many who read this may be hearing of these very fundamental and basic questions for the first time in their lives. However, if we look to the Qur’an [or Koran] the answers are there, and so we see that Allah clearly states that He did not create us and the universe without a purpose:

1. “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding. Those who remember Allah while standing or sitting or lying on their sides, and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying, ‘Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly, exalted are You, protect us from the punishment of the Fire’.” (Aal ‘Imran 3:190-191) [So I guess a “purpose” is to avoid the Fire!]
2. “And We did not create the heaven and the earth and that which is between them aimlessly. That is the assumption of those who disbelieve, so woe to those who disbelieve from the Fire.” (Saa’d 38:27) [Hmmm... threats again.]
3. “And We did not create the heavens and the earth and that which is between them in play.” (Ad-Dukhan 44:38)

And furthermore we see in the Qur’an that the purpose of our lives is clearly defined:

1. “O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous.” (Al-Baqarah 2:21)
2. “And I did not create the jinn [or genie: “an intelligent spirit of lower rank than the angels, able to appear in human and animal forms and to possess humans”] and mankind except to worship Me.” (Adh-Dhariyat 51:56)

These verses were revealed to us by Allah [And the data supporting that assertion are where?! Are you sure they weren’t concocted by the clerics with the collection plates?] in order to inform us of why we are here, what we should be doing, and where we are heading. Not to benefit Himself nor because He needs our worship, rather because we are in need of Him. We were created for this one reason: to worship Allah and to strive to be [do?] the best of deeds.

We have to remember that Allah created life and death so that we may worship Him, and perform that worship in the best manner. That is what our objective should be. Instead of contradicting the purpose of man’s existence and acting for the sake of perishable worldly interests, we must fulfill its completion. Our period here is short and being slave to worldly gains results in the corruption of our souls, constant difficulty, worry and poverty.

The Prophet (SAW) said, “Allah says: O Son of Adam, fill your time with My worship and I will fill your heart with richness, and end off your poverty. [So, I guess that means the real goal is to “fill your heart with richness, and end off your poverty”!] But if you do not, I would make your hands fully busy (i.e., in worldly affairs) and I would not end off your poverty.” (At-Tirmidhee)

So in a nutshell the purpose behind our existence is to recognize the one who created us, to be grateful to Him, to worship Him, to surrender ourselves to Him, and to obey the laws that He has determined for us. [As specified by the clerics, who are always there to interpret the laws – for a price!] It is not enough to say that “I have believed, therefore I have accomplished this purpose.” Allah commands us in the Qur’an to enter into Islam completely not partially:

O you who believe! Enter into Islam completely, and follow not the footsteps of Shaytan [Satan]. Verily, he is to you an open enemy. (Al-Baqarah 2:208)

And Allah warns us of being from among those who took their religion lightly:

And the companions of the Fire will call to the companions of Paradise, “Pour upon us some water, or from whatever Allah has provided you.” They will say, “Indeed, Allah has forbidden them both to the disbelievers, those who took their religion as distraction and amusement and whom the worldly life deluded.” So today We will forget them just as they forgot the meeting of this Day of theirs and for having rejected our verses. (Al-A’raf 7:50-51)

From the above it can be concluded that there is not a shadow of a doubt that we have been informed of our purpose, and were shown the way to achieve it, the choice is now ours.

Now, Dear, whereas there isn’t a single shred of data to support such silly speculations, let me now move on to the purpose, proposed and pursued, by the great human and Humanist Dr. Ali Sina – whose website (at <http://www.news.faithfreedom.org/index.php>) I urge you to visit... and study! In the copy of his essay that follows, I’ve added only a couple of notes in “square brackets”, I’ve made a few, minor, editorial changes (where what he wrote caused me to momentarily stumble, trying to understand what he meant), and also, in a few places, I’ve eliminated some text (where you’ll find ellipses, “...”), in some cases because I was concerned that until you read the Koran (which I’ll be urging you to do in **Qx**), you might conclude that Sina is exaggerating – but he (an ex-Muslim) is not!

The Purpose of Life⁹

by Ali Sina (2006/05/21)

VirtualEye [I assume a pseudonym] who participates in the forum of FFI [Faith Freedom International] sent me a PM [Personal Message] asking:

“Can you explain what is the purpose and from which divine source you got the purpose of life?”

Before answering this question, let me clarify that there is no such thing as divine source. This very idea is a fallacy. Which philosophy or religion has divine source and where is the proof? We have great philosophies that teach us to be good, loving, and how to be enlightened; in my view, these are divine philosophies. But the source of these philosophies is not supernatural. They are manmade. They are made by people who were selfless and wise. Following those teachings will benefit us. They are true but not divine. Why they are true? It's because they make sense, they are logical, and they make us better humans.

What is the proof that philosophy X is divine? Take the example of Islam. Can any Muslim prove that the Quran is the word of God? There are thousands of cults and each has many followers. Some of them are really dangerous. Why should we believe in Islam and not in these cults?

We call divine something that is supremely good; beautiful; magnificent; pleasant; delightful. And we call satanic something that is extremely evil; cruel; fiendish and unholy.

Based on this definition, in which category [does] Islam fall...? This is not a question that Muslims can answer objectively. The followers of any doctrine can't be objective about their faith. The followers of Jim Jones believed so much in him that they murdered their own children and themselves when he told them to.

On May 19th 2006, CNN's Anderson Cooper showed a one hour program on Warren Jeffs, the self proclaimed prophet of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. His followers work for him for free. They live on welfare, while he makes 2 million dollars net profit per month out of their free labor. He has about 100 wives, more than seventy of them were previously married to his father who died in 2002. He decides who should marry whom. Women are told that polygamy is divine mandate, and they foolishly accept sharing one husband. His followers do not object when he orders them to give in marriage their minor daughters to old men. Women are taken away from their husbands and assigned to other men at the order of

⁹ Posted at <http://www.faithfreedom.org/oped/sina60521.htm>, with the notice: “© **copyright**. Permission is granted to translate and reproduce the articles in this site. Please provide a link to the original page.” Thank you, Ali Sina!

Jeffs. He has prohibited them to have radio, TV, or the Internet. They can only listen to his songs. He is among the top ten most wanted men by FBI for statutory rape of a minor, but his followers protect him and therefore capturing him has not been easy.

Is this cult divine? His followers certainly think so. That is why they are willing to sacrifice so much for their belief. But is this cult really divine? Does the intense faith of the believers prove the truth of a creed?

The believers are not in a position to make objective analysis of their belief. So the opinions of Muslims about Islam are irrelevant. Once we analyze Islam objectively, we can see that it is not divine. Islam orders killing the unbelievers, it says women are less than men, it is okay to marry 9-years-old girls, adulterers should be stoned to death, and apostates should be killed. All these teachings are satanic. They are cruel, evil and fiendish...

Now, as for the purpose of life, this is a question for which each person must find his own answer. I will give you my answer. You should find your own. The answer I give you is not divine but it is good, pleasant and beautiful. It is an answer that satisfies my soul and lifts me up spiritually. It is not devilish, selfish, cruel or evil.

I have chosen that my life should be to serve my fellow human being and make this world a better place. Since childhood, my dream was to go to a third world country and build orphanages, adopt the abandoned children and create a huge family. Not always do our dreams come true. Far from a huge family, I have just my cat as my company. My dream did not materialize, but this does not mean I have failed the purpose of my life.

I can do something else to serve mankind. Something that is in my power and I can do it. After I came to see how evil Islam is, I knew the purpose of my life is to destroy Islam. I started writing the truth about Islam, helping Muslims see the light and others to be warned of the danger of this cult of death and terror. If I help one potential suicide bomber to see that Islam is false and leave it, I have saved his life and the lives of his potential victims.

So I have done something good and divine. And this I have already done. With my writings, I have literally saved lives. But not all the Muslims are going to become suicide bombers. Some of them will just live a miserable life and make the lives of other around them also miserable. By making them see the truth and leave Islam, I can save them too. I can bring happiness to countless wretched lives.

These people who become enlightened will not sit silent. Immediately after seeing the truth they rise to let other Muslims see it too. So if I help one person out of Islam, that person will help someone else and that one will help others and we grow exponentially. Do not underestimate the power of the exponential growth. We can destroy Islam in our own lifetime. By destroying this evil cult, we will save the lives of millions of people and improve their quality of life.

Why [are so many] people in all Muslim countries... backward, poor and suffering? It is because of Islam. Once we defeat Islam, Muslims (or rather ex-Muslims) will be awakened and will go after science and progress, not after wild geese and 72 ninety feet tall see-through celestial whores. By destroying Islam, the quality of the lives of all these wretched people will be improved and the world will be saved.

What would you say of a person who finds a cure for a disease and saves millions of lives? Don't you think that person has fulfilled the purpose of his life? Now which organ in human body is the king? Of course the brain! What if we manage to save the brains of a billion people who now suffer from severe mental disability? Wouldn't that be a mighty feat? There is no doubt that Islam destroys the brains of its victims...

The purpose of life for us humans is to live as humans, and that means to use our brains. This is what distinguishes us... from animals. Muslims fail miserably in fulfilling this purpose, because they have forsaken the use of their brains... As a Muslim, your first goal should be to regain your humanity... Your purpose in life should be to come back to your roots, throw away your satanic beliefs that reduce you into an evil being, and become human again. Weed out the thorns of hatred from your heart and plant the roses of love in their place.

What is the purpose of the life of a tree? It's to be a good tree, to blossom in the spring and to yield copious and sweet fruits in the summer. The purpose of our lives is to be full humans – to acquire, not beastly, but humane and spiritual qualities. Love, compassion, forgiveness, caring, empathy and kindness are humane qualities. These are qualities that we have to acquire to fulfill the purpose of our lives. These are the sweet fruits of the tree of humanity. Islam incites hate, instills terror and causes war and bloodshed. It is contrary to the purpose of life. It is evil. It takes away your humanity and it reduces you to an animal or less than that...

The purpose of our life is to advance the human civilization. What is the purpose of the life of a bee? The purpose of her life is to provide for her hive and make sure that future generations thrive. The purpose of our lives is similar. It is to live, to be happy, and to pass this happiness to others. We must realize that we are part of this universe. Like all other objects, and creatures in it, we have a job to do. Our job is to evolve, live happily, learn and pass that learning to others and contribute to the vast pool of human knowledge.

The purpose of life is to be happy and make others happy too. Islam does the opposite. It tells Muslims that God loves suffering and also it makes them so evil that they take away the happiness of others and rejoice in their pain and sorrow.

To be happy and contribute to the happiness of others are interrelated. We can't feel true happiness at the expense of others. We are part of this world and a member of

the family of mankind. In order for us to be happy as individuals, all mankind must be happy.

The purpose of life is Life itself! This is something a bee knows. She stings the intruder to her hive knowing that she is committing suicide. But she does it to save the life of her hive. She sacrifices her own life for the well-being of her kind. Are we humans less than bees? Our life is important, but the life of mankind and this planet is far more important. Life with the capital L is more important than my life. The purpose of my life is to evolve and to contribute to the evolution of life.

Compare yourself to a cell in a body. You can't be healthy and happy unless the entire body is healthy. But the body is made of many other cells just like you. So if you do your work and contribute to the health of other cells, they will in turn provide an environment in which you can thrive.

Understanding the oneness of mankind and its interrelatedness is crucial. One man's happiness depends on the happiness of all mankind, and when the entire world is happy, all its members will be happy too. This is divine. This is good. There is nothing satanic in this teaching...

Now let us talk about the purpose of life as taught in Islam. The Quran says: “**I have created the *jinn* and humankind only for My worship.**” So the purpose of life according to Islam is to worship Allah. In other words Allah was feeling lonely, he created this universe and put on it humans in order to worship him. Now think about it. Isn't this psychopathological? This definition is so childish, so stupid that it is ludicrous.

I can find faults in this explanation from every angle.

- a) The claim that God created this world is a fallacy. This implies that God acted in time, and therefore he must be subject to time, and as such, he can't be the creator of it.
- b) It also implies that the creation falls outside the creator, and as the result, he is limited in space and not the creator of it. Where the creation is, God can't be. This belies the claim of his omnipresence. A god limited by time and by space is in itself a limited being and not infinite.
- c) If there was a time that the universe did not exist, then prior to its creation, God could not have been called creator. He became a creator after he created, just as you are not a father until you conceive your child, or you are not a painter until you paint. This means that God is gaining attributes, he is improving. As the result, he can't be perfect. If at anytime God existed without his creation, then prior to the creation he could not have been a creator.

- d) If the creation and the creator co-existed always and the existence is as old as its creator, then the creator becomes superfluous.
- e) Why would God want to be worshipped at all? Let us say I feel lonely, and I create robots and program them to worship and praise me all the time. What this says about the state of my mind? Wouldn't you think I would be nuts?
- f) This god as described by Muhammad is also needy and desperate. Not only he demands his own creation to worship him, which is utterly foolish, he also punishes them for eternity if they fail to do that? Isn't this psychopathic? Isn't this sadistic?
- g) Allah is also a despot. I did not ask to be born. Why should I thank and worship someone for something I am forced to do? Furthermore, why should I be punished if I don't thank him? This is like my forcing someone into my home, [keep him] for sometime... demand payment from him and beat him to death if he refuses to pay. If this life is forced upon us, then we are not required to thank anyone for it. We have no choice but to live it, so we must make it as painless as possible. Why should we thank anyone for a life we did not ask for? Furthermore, Islam regards this life as prison, why should we thank God for putting us in this prison? He must be despised not worshipped. Not only Allah, himself, is mentally sick, he wants us to have Stockholm Syndrome too and love our jail keeper and tormentor.
- h) Since this life is forced on us, it is God's responsibility to provide for us and make us feel comfy and happy. But we see that he is failing to provide that happiness for everyone. He must be reprimanded, not thanked. This is called abuse. Imagine being abducted by some aliens from outer space and then asked to worship them or be tortured. Does an insane god like that deserve our thanks?
- i) Love is the child of freedom. You can't force love on people. You can't threaten people to love you. You fall in love with someone because of his/her delightful attributes. If this person demands you to love him and threatens you with severe punishment if you don't love him; that is no longer love – that is fear. Fear and love are opposite of each other. Only a psychopath cannot distinguish the difference between love and fear. Muhammad was a psychopath. He wanted to dominate people through fear, and hence, his god is a fearsome god that has chambers of torture and is most unforgiving. His god is as sick as himself.
- j) Muhammad's god is also unjust. The punishment must not exceed the sin. The Quran says that Allah punishes those who do not believe in him for eternity. That he will forgive all sins including genocide – but will not forgive the sin of disbelief. That he would make the unbelievers wear garments of fire, pouring on them boiling water, and renewing their skin just to burn them again and again and make their suffering perpetual. This is sadistic. The punishment exceeds the alleged crime infinitely. Assuming [that] not worshipping Allah is a sin, it is not

a sin that hurts anyone. Why should we be burned in such an excruciating way for eternity because of it? It is clear that Allah's punishment exceeds the alleged sin. This is like putting to death by torture those who exceed the parking limit? This whole concept is insane and reveals Muhammad's low wits.

I can go on, but this much should suffice to show you that Muhammad was insane. He, like all cult leaders, wanted to dominate through fear. Why do you think that the followers of Warren Jeffs work for him for free, let him sleep with their teenager daughters, and allow him to have this much control over them? It's because, like Muhammad, he has managed to frighten them with hell fire if they disobey him. And he has promised them that they will be rewarded handsomely for their sacrifices in the other world. These charlatans are most generous in promising great rewards after life. If you think the followers of Jeffs are stupid, the followers of Muhammad are ten times more stupid.

Let me tell you what hell is. Hell is living in stupidity. God gave us a brain. Hell is not using that brain. You not only suffer in this world, but if there is a life after death, you will regret for eternity for not using it. What do you think would be the reward of the foolish followers of Warren Jeffs, Jim Jones, Shoko Asahara, David Koresh or other cultists? Would they be rewarded because in this world they suffered? All they will get is eternal regret for throwing their only chance away, for not using their brains, for letting a crook mislead them with lies and for allowing their fears take control of their better judgment. Muslims will regret much more because Muhammad was far more evil than any one of these con-artist cult leaders and his religion is way more stupid. It's precisely because Islam is so stupid that makes the throes of regret more unbearable.

The purpose of life for humans is to use their brains. Muslims are failing to fulfill that purpose.

Dear: please think about it. What do you think is your purpose? And whatever you eventually decide is your purpose, please notice one incontrovertible point: it's only you who can (and must!) decide. No matter what anyone else says, or recommends, or cajoles, or threatens, or... still in the end, the decision is entirely yours. Sorry about that, kid; it's called life – and yours will be promoted, if you get some exercise!