Abandoning Separation from Biblical Error

By R E Palgrave
Biblical Separation | Sword & Trowel
January 2013

Wales Evangelical School of Theology (WEST) appoints pro-Rick Warren and David Yonggi Cho trustees

For many years independent evangelicals kept apart from churches in denominations affiliated to the apostate World Council of Churches, such as Anglican, Baptist Union and Methodist churches. The British Evangelical Council (whose members included the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, Grace Baptist Churches and the Free Church of Scotland) did not admit churches that belonged to those ecumenical denominations. But in 2004 the British evangelical Council changed its name to Affinity and appointed Jonathan Stephen as Director, who encouraged the membership of Anglican and Baptist Union churches, terminating the policy of biblical separation.

In 2006, Jonathan Stephen became Principal of WEST, or Wales Evangelical School of Theology, introducing his hostility to biblical separation to this institution.

The outcome, within six years, has been the merger of WEST with the international mission of a Korean church, SaRang Community Church, in Seoul, a mega-church with mystical, occult, charismatic and ecumenical ties.

The collapse of this college into the arms of such a confusion of errors is a major calamity, the facts of which are set out here by R E Palgrave. (A longer version of this article appears in the current edition of the Bible League Quarterly).

WEST’s Alliance with the SaRang Community Church

Jonathan Stephen reported in Evangelicals Now[1] that links were first established in 2007 between WEST and the SaRang Community Church through one of WEST’s Korean students. The SaRang megachurch was eager to extend its mission to Europe and had an interest in Wales due to the fact that the Welshman Robert Jermain Thomas (1839-1866) was one of the early Christian missionaries to Korea. Furthermore, the WEST Council saw that the Korean megachurch could provide the financial help they required. Jonathan Stephen wrote:

“They realised that they themselves were not in a position to project the School to the next level — to build the internationally recognised centre for theological learning and training for ministry they were praying for. They saw that SaRang were prepared to invest substantially in the School and could secure its development. They understood that good stewardship on SaRang’s part demanded that they should acquire a large stake in the formation of a new Board. They agreed that the baton needed to be passed on.”[2]

When a church or Christian organisation contemplates a possible future partnership with other churches or groups, it is vital that they thoroughly examine the theology and practice of potential partners to ensure that they are Biblically sound and are not involved in any sort of spiritual compromise. SaRang Community Church is a Presbyterian Church with about 80,000 members.[3]

It was founded in 1978, and is now pastored by Pastor Jung-Hyun Oh.[4]

As we shall see, long before 2007 the SaRang Community Church had links with both the Charismatic/mystical occult teacher Paul (David) Yonggi Cho and Rick Warren, author of the famous bestselling book The Purpose Driven Life. Tragically, however, the partnership went ahead. In October 2008 Jonathan Stephen and Peter Milsom, the WEST Council Chairman,[5] attended the 30th anniversary celebrations of SaRang. Further negotiations then took place. Jonathan Stephen
reported that at the end of February 2011:

‘Peter [Milsom]…and I returned to Seoul…for the formal signing of the papers that would seal our gospel partnership.’[6]

Pastor Oh then took over as the new Chancellor of WEST, replacing Peter Milsom.[7] The new WEST board includes five Korean trustees, and also the International Director of the Lausanne Movement. (It is surprising that the College should wish to associate with the Lausanne Movement as it is so ecumenically compromised.)

**SaRang’s Relations with David Yonggi Cho**

In May 2001 Pastor Oh was senior pastor of the *SaRang Community Church* in Los Angeles, California.[8] He organised a Spiritual Renewal Conference which began with a meeting with himself, Dr. Yonggi Cho and Rev. Rick Warren of Saddleback Church, California, followed by several preaching rallies with Dr. Cho as the main speaker. Dr. Cho believes that threefold blessings are available for every believer: salvation of the soul, physical healing and prosperity.[9] In this conference Cho emphasised that physical healing is available to every believer if they have enough faith.

David (formerly Paul) Yonggi Cho[10] is one of the most influential Charismatic preachers alive today, and Emeritus Pastor of the *Yoido Full Gospel Church* in Seoul, the world’s largest church with about a million members. He claims that he received the call to preach directly from Jesus Christ, who he says appeared to him dressed like a fireman.[11] David Yonggi Cho emphasises the gift of tongues, divine healing and the importance of the ‘cell-group ministry,’ for which he has appointed 50,000 leaders, 47,000 of them being female[12]. He is a proponent of the influential Charismatic Word-Faith[13] New Age teaching which says that the believer is God and Christ[14] and that faith is a creative force that can be used to shape one’s own world, a common occult and New Age belief.[15] He teaches that the ‘third dimension’ is the material world, while the ‘fourth dimension’ is the spiritual world, and that one can influence the third dimension. He states that ‘through visualization and dreaming you can incubate your future and hatch the results.’[16] The *Word-Faith Movement* is underpinned by enormous amounts of money raised through promises of healing and prosperity.[17]

In their 2001 Spiritual Revival Conference Dr. Yonggi Cho reported that Pastor Oh had decided that the main theme of the conference should be ‘Let us become a peace offering.’[18] Pastor Oh emphasised:

‘Korean churches are strong in Systematic Theology. This means that I am right; others are wrong. We are not of the same mind. Through the help of the Holy Spirit, I want the Korean ethnic churches to eliminate denominational barriers.’[19]

Pastor Oh’s Presbyterian church to re-assess their views on the Holy Spirit.[20] Certainly the influences of the Charismatic Movement can be seen today in both the Los Angeles *SaRang Community Church* and the Seoul *SaRang Community Church* where Pastor Oh is currently the minister.

When Rev. Sam Ko, (a member of the Seoul *SaRang Community Church* and the new Chairman of the WEST Board) came to preach at Mount Pleasant Church in Swansea he attended with a group of the *SaRang* Church members who were studying at WEST and invited them to sing some songs. They chose to sing the Charismatic songs *Let it Rain* and *Our God is an Awesome God*. The song *Let it Rain* refers to the Charismatic longing for the heavens to open and for God to pour out His Holy Spirit in revival. The wording of the song is: ‘Let it rain, let it rain. Open the floodgates of Heaven.’ (The Korean WEST students sang this one line fifteen times).

However, the Charismatic Movement teaches that revival means ‘signs and wonders’ such as ‘tongues,’ dreams, visions, prophesying, and even ‘spirit slaying,’ uncontrollable jerking and spasms of the body, shaking and ‘holy laughter.’[21]
The *Let it Rain* song is part of the album *Come Away* by the contemporary ‘Christian’ band *Jesus Culture*. This band has said that its aim is to create an atmosphere by its music whereby people can encounter the presence of God and experience the signs mentioned above. As is common in the genre of Contemporary Christian Music,[22] the band members say that this is what their music encourages and explain that they want their worship events to have the following effect on the worshippers:

‘We want you to be equipped in the realm of the supernatural - in prayer, in power, in the prophetic, in dreams, in signs and wonders, healing, uh you know, all this stuff.’[23]

Rev. Sam Ko showed his approval of these Charismatic worship songs after the WEST students’ performance by commenting that:

‘The way they were singing was more powerful than size condom style - (church laughs) because, because they have Jesus, because they know Jesus isn’t it.’ (Rev. Sam Ko laughs).[24]

*WEST* has partnered with Sound of Wales (*SOW*), a group of musicians promoting Contemporary Christian Music within Wales. The *SOW* musicians have announced on their website that they are in the process of discussions with *WEST* regarding a degree in contemporary worship:

‘Another exciting partnership is with *WEST* theological seminary. This will be the place where the brand spanking new degree in contemporary worship starts in September 2013... We are currently in the throngs of meetings with the head bods at *WEST*, putting together a plan for the degree’s start...’[25]

**Sarang’s Relations with Rick Warren**

The relationship between Pastor Oh of the *SaRang Community Church* and Rick Warren has lasted over 20 years. Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven* teaching embraces a gospel whereby one need only ‘receive and believe’ in the Lord Jesus Christ without any need for true repentance or holiness of life.[26] The book mixes ‘Christian’ teachings with those of the New Agers, mystics and Roman Catholics,[27] and is therefore similar to the ‘Emerging Church’ teachings. Indeed in Rick Warren’s foreword to Dan Kimball’s book *The Emerging Church*, he proclaimed:

‘This book is a wonderful, detailed example of what a purpose-driven church can look like in a post-modern world... While my book *The Purpose Driven Church* explained what the church is called to do, Dan’s book explains how to do it.’[28]

His *Purpose Driven Church* growth model shares many similarities with the liberal Emerging Church leader Brian McLaren’s notions that Christianity should focus on social justice and humanitarian efforts here and now rather than on a relationship with Jesus Christ and preparing for Heaven.

Rick Warren also has close associations with Mark Driscoll,[29] the controversial pastor of *Mars Hill Church*, Seattle, who describes himself as ‘theologically conservative and culturally liberal,’[30] and they share a concern with being culturally relevant, for example in embracing rock music in the church.

The strong influence of Rick Warren on the *SaRang Community Church* in Seoul is evident from their website. The church has current links to many pages on Rick Warren and his *Purpose Driven* teachings and messages from Rick Warren to the church.[31] Furthermore, Rick Warren is featured on the church Introductory Video.[32] In this video, the speaker claims that ‘*SaRang Community Church* has been a pioneer in bringing revival through various ministries.’

But what do they mean by ‘revival’? One of the six ministries mentioned which is supposed to have brought revival is the *Purpose Driven Life* Conference led by Rick Warren in 2006. Pictures of Rick Warren playing the drums in a huge auditorium are shown whilst the video audio information is given.
A news report[33] of the 2006 event explained that Dr. Warren’s visit had been organised by Pastor Oh of the SaRang Community Church, Dr. Billy Kim[34] and Dr. David Yonggi Cho.

Tragically, many Christians today are following Rick Warren and his Purpose Driven Church growth philosophies rather than the message of the Bible. Roger Oakland has estimated that ‘over 400,000 churches have now participated in Rick Warren’s Purpose Driven program.’[35] The influence of Rick Warren in Korea is apparent in the statement by David Yonggi Cho:

‘God has used Dr. Warren to renew the Korean Church and Christian faith in Korea. I have never seen so many preachers gathered together in one place, and I am very happy about it.’[36]

Rev Sam Ko (Chairman of the WEST Board) has translated Rick Warren’s Purpose Driven Life into Korean.[37] Sadly, over a million Koreans have now been fed Rick Warren’s teachings. At an event celebrating the sale of the first million copies of the Korean version of his book, Rick Warren invited Rev. Sam Ko to the stage in order to receive applause from the Saddleback Church members.

Inevitably, Rev Sam Ko appears to have been influenced by Rick Warren’s gospel message with its easy believism. In his sermon at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Swansea, this was his explanation of the Gospel:

‘...it is so simple. It is so simple. It is the power of God to everyone who believes. So simple isn’t it! The Gospel is so simple! Ladies and Gentlemen, in order to have the Gospel in your heart, you don’t have to beg to God: “Please please please please please please please.” You don’t have to beg to God. You don’t have to bargain with God: “Oh God, if you give me something then I’m not going to eat chocolate for the rest of my life.” You don’t have to say that! You don’t have to bargain with God. Or, you don’t have to bribe to God: “Oh God if you give me this - okay – um, I’m going to make sure to uh to attend Sunday service every Sunday!” You don’t have to bribe to God – “I’m going to give you ten pounds.” You don’t have to bribe to God! You don’t have to beg to God. You don’t have to bargain with God. You don’t have to uh bribe to God. Only thing you’ve gotta do is, you only BELIEVE! You only BELIEVE! You see God made it so simple that nobody could say it was too hard to understand.’[38]

Pastor Rick Warren and Pastor Jung-Hyun Oh have signed a covenant to celebrate their unity and commitment to upholding the values of the Rick Warren P.E.A.C.E. Plan.

This P.E.A.C.E. Plan was created with the aim of enlisting ‘one billion foot soldiers’ to overcome the five ‘global giants’ of ‘spiritual emptiness, self-serving leadership, poverty, disease and illiteracy.’[39] ‘P.E.A.C.E.’ stands for ‘Plant churches that promote reconciliation, Equip servant leaders, Assist the poor, Care for the sick, and Educate the next generation.’[40]

Rick Warren has said that the fulfilment of the P.E.A.C.E. Plan requires a ‘three-legged stool’ consisting of government, business and religion.[41] Warren believes that this all-inclusive church[42] with its ecumenical and interfaith practice will be the key to the success of his Plan. He claims that the Lord Jesus Christ told him that he should embrace any man of peace to work with in his P.E.A.C.E. Plan, and that the man of peace could as easily be Muslim, Jewish or Roman Catholic as Christian.[43]

Warren’s Plan, therefore, is not about what the Church believes, but rather what it is doing; not about the Lord Jesus Christ but rather an ecumenical group of religious people brought together to eliminate social problems.

The ecumenical agenda of both Rick Warren and David Yonggi Cho is also evidenced by the fact that both have signed[44] the document A Common Word Between Us and You,[45] a letter dated 13 October, 2007, from leaders of...

‘The Unity of God, the necessity of love for Him, and the necessity of love of the neighbour is thus the common ground between Islam and Christianity.'
...as Muslims, and in obedience to the Holy Qur’an, we ask Christians to come together with us on the two essentials of our religions... that we shall worship none but God... (Aal ‘Imran, 3:64).

Let this common ground be the basis of all future interfaith dialogue between us...’[46]

It was also signed by Roman Catholics, prominent theological modernists, ‘Emerging Church’ leaders such as Brian McLaren and Bill Hybels,[47] New Age and ‘self-esteem’ guru Robert Schuller (whose philosophies have greatly influenced both Rick Warren and Yonggi Cho),[48] John Stott,[49] Leith Anderson,[50] Michael Treneer[51] and other evangelicals.[52]

At the signing of the covenant to uphold Rick Warren’s P.E.A.C.E. Plan Pastor Oh said:

‘We are living in this postmodern period that calls for different steps to produce action. SaRang Church is a disciple-making church intent on doing whatever it takes to reach people for Jesus.[53] Partnering with Saddleback and working together, our hope is that we can win a lot of young people in the 21st century and build them up to be future church leaders.’[54]

‘I’m thankful that God has given us this wonderful relationship with Pastor Rick for the past 20 years—trusting one another, walking together and being able to climb this high mountain set before us as one team.’[55]

The photograph of Pastor Oh and Rick Warren holding their covenant together and the report of the event can be seen on the internet.[56]

The influence of Rick Warren throughout the world is enormous and he is undoubtedly contributing to the bringing in of the One World Church through his false Christianity and ecumenical aims.

**WEST and the Acts 29 Network**

*WEST* now also has links with the church-planting network *Acts 29 through the Porterbrook Network*[57] which provides teaching courses for Christians. The *Acts 29 Network* was founded by the Emerging Church leader Mark Driscoll and is currently led by Matt Chandler.[58]

Mark Driscoll is a very influential New Calvinist who is promoting the mixing of Calvinistic theology with worldliness. Driscoll has established R-rated movie nights, beer-making sessions, parties serving alcohol, rock music in the services and rock concerts at the church. There is inappropriate sexual content and language in his preaching, he promotes tattoos, uses profane language,[59] and even practices divination.[60]

The Porterbrook Network is an *Affinity Associate* and its websites states that it subscribes to ‘the doctrinal basis of Affinity. Students need to accept that this is who we are.’ *The Porterbrook Network* has announced that the course has been ‘commended and endorsed’ by the *Acts 29 Network*, Timothy Keller and others.

The Porterbrook Network’s teaching reflects Tim Keller’s New Calvinism, the ‘missional’ emphasis of the Emerging Church, and the *Acts 29* ‘contextualising’ of Scripture. This can be clearly seen in the titles of the course modules.

*WEST* has announced the following on their website under the title ‘New Initiatives:’

‘The partnership with SaRang Church is bearing fruit, founded on mutual trust. This remarkable Korean church has a vision for re-equipping the churches of Wales, particularly in the Valleys. The Porterbrook Network in Wales – focused on church planting – is now based at *WEST*...’[61]

Furthermore, the new Chairman of the *WEST* board, Sam Ko, has announced that *WEST* is intending to work directly with *Acts 29*. On October 14th, 2012, Sam Ko declared that *WEST* is working on a project known as the Valley Commandos Project. He said the following:

‘We are going to do this ministry together called the Valley Commandos Project... and SaRang Church is going to work together with *WEST*, with Mount Pleasant Baptist Church,[62] many Welsh churches and the mission agencies such as *Acts 29*, and the denomination that this church belongs to: FIEC.[63] What we have agreed is that yes, we are moving! It is about time for us to move into the Valleys and we are going to plant 12 churches in those 14 valleys.’[64]
Given the ongoing associations of Pastor Oh and Rev. Sam Ko with Rick Warren and his *Purpose Driven* teachings, the Charismatic leanings of the SaRang church, and the New Calvinist theology of *Acts 29* with the worldliness of its leaders, one wonders at the type of teaching to which the Welsh Valleys are about to be introduced.

**Conclusion**

We are witnessing a global collapse of the biblical doctrine of separation and a great mixing of truth with error resulting in spiritual confusion and apostasy. Reformed and evangelical truths are being mixed with New Age ideas, mysticism, Roman Catholic practices, culturally-relevant worldliness, the promotion of ecumenical ideas in Charismatic worship and the ‘Emerging Church’, the promotion of the social justice gospel and emphases on Charismatic so-called ‘experiences’ of God.

*WEST* can no longer be considered a Reformed college as it is closely associated with dangerous false teachers, the Emergent Acts 29 network, the ecumenically compromised Lausanne Movement, and Charismatic and Emergent philosophies. The non-separatist stand adopted by *Affinity* and *WEST* can only lead evangelicals into association with error, apostasy and ecumenicity.

**References**


[2] Ibid.

[3] http://english.sarang.org/ ('History’ page). According to the *SaRang* Church website the 80,000 members consist of 9,000 children, 31,000 young adults and 40,000 adults.


[5] Rev. Peter Milsom has continued Affinity along the same lines as Jonathan Stephen. ‘...we do not require a church to have actually seceded from their denomination in order to join Affinity. We recognize that some churches believe that they should continue to witness actively to the truth within their denominations...’ http://exiledpreacher.blogspot.co.uk/2011/08/interview-with-affinity-director-peter.html


[7] Ibid.


Also referred to as Positive Confession or the Faith Movement. Other Word-Faith teachers include Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, Paul Crouch, Joel Osteen and Rodney Howard-Browne, leader of the so-called ‘spirit’ drunken laughing revivals.

Kenneth Copeland, for example, stated: ‘You don’t have a god in you, you are one.’ The Force of Love (audiotape). See also Ray Yungen For Many Shall Come In My Name (Lighthouse Trails, 2007, pp.21-23).


Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho The Fourth Dimension (Bridge Publishing, 1979, p.44).

David Cloud, op. cit., p.384.


David Cloud The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements: The History and Error (Way of Life Literature, 2006).

See the DVD set Music for Good or Evil (David Cloud, Way of Life Literature) which examines the musical characteristics of CCM: http://www.wayoflife.org/publications/video/music_for_good_or_evil.php and the DVD/free eVideo: The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music http://www.wayoflife.org/free_evideo/foreign_spirit.php

Sermon entitled Three great I am’s by Rev. Sam Ko (morning service, October 14th, 2012). http://www.mountpleasantchurch.org.uk/sermons.htm


Rick Warren frequently quotes from Roman Catholics and mystics to promote centering prayer and other Catholic-pagan forms of spirituality. For example, in The Purpose Driven Church and The Purpose Driven Life Warren advises his readers to ‘practice breath prayers’ as per the Benedictines.


[34] Dr. Billy Kim was the president of the ecumenical Baptist World Alliance from 2000 until 2005.


[37] [http://www.hanbooks.com/pudrli.html](http://www.hanbooks.com/pudrli.html)

[38] Sermon by Rev. Sam Ko (morning service, October 14th, 2012). [http://www.mountpleasantchurch.org.uk/sermons.htm](http://www.mountpleasantchurch.org.uk/sermons.htm)


[40] Ibid.

[41] Roger Oakland, op. cit., p.146.


[43] Ibid.

[44] [http://www.yale.edu/faith/acw/acw.htm](http://www.yale.edu/faith/acw/acw.htm)


[46] Ibid.

[47] Bill Hybels is the pastor of *Willow Creek Community Church* in the USA. He is an Emerging Church leader and he works closely with Rick Warren on humanitarian problems such as the AIDS issue.


[49] John Robert Walmsley Stott CBE (1921 -2011) was an Anglican cleric and one of the principal authors of the Lausanne Covenant in 1974. He was the Rector Emeritus of *All Souls Church* London at the time of signing.
Leith Anderson is the President of the National Association of Evangelicals.

Michael Treneer is the International President of The Navigators.

http://www.yale.edu/faith/acw/acw.htm

The SaRang Community Church has its own similar ministry to Rick Warren’s P.E.A.C.E. Plan entitled: H.E.A.R.T. See http://english.sarang.org/


Ibid.

Ibid.

http://www.porterbrooknetwork.org/

Matt Chandler is Lead Pastor of The Village Church in Dallas, Texas.

Mark Driscoll was nicknamed ‘Mark the cussing pastor’ by Donald Miller in his book Blue Like Jazz (Thomas Nelson, 2003).

Divination is communicating with demons in order to discover information. It is forbidden by God (Deuteronomy 18:10).

See Phil Johnson’s warning about Mark Driscoll and divination: http://teampyro.blogspot.co.uk/2011/08/pornographic-divination.html

Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Swansea. The pastor is Steve Levy.

Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches

Sermon by Rev. Sam Ko (morning service, October 14th, 2012). http://www.mountpleasantchurch.org.uk/sermons.htm

Readers may also be interested Dr Peter Masters article titled- ‘Secondary Separation: When to Stand Apart’. Available on the Metropolitan Tabernacle website.