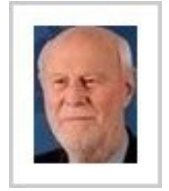


Rick Warren and the Daniel Plan

By Dave Hunt

[The Berean Call](#)



Question: Why are you and other "discernment" writers so critical of Rick Warren and his new Daniel Plan? What difference does it make that Rick Warren turns to some of the best secular doctors in the nation to help the church with its battle over obesity, physical fitness, and mental health? After all, Christians don't have to ensure that their cars are repaired only by Christian mechanics, and their toilets unstopped only by Christian plumbers. If you've got a problem with your physical body, isn't it far more important to have the very best doctor's advice, regardless of their religious background?



Response: As long as one's mechanic or plumber isn't incorporating unbiblical spiritual content in his service to a believer, his religious background shouldn't be a problem. However, that is not the case with the eminent doctors that Rick Warren has selected to minister to his congregation and those hundreds of thousands who follow his ministry. All three of the medical doctors are practitioners of various forms of Eastern mystical meditation and occultism, which they promote in their well-being programs of body, mind, and spirit. No doubt their medical science education gives them valuable insights into the workings of their patients' bodies, but what of mind and spirit? The mind is not the brain; it's part of man's nonphysical makeup. There is no objective science of mind. There is only the metaphysical kind. There is no objective science of the spirit. There are no scientific instruments for evaluating a person's spirit. It's purely a subjective religious matter.



Furthermore, your question reflects the religious pragmatism ("whatever works") that leads many believers to abandon biblical authority, compromise their faith, supplant the gospel, and even endanger their very lives. The journey of departing from the Truth may not begin with such stark choices, but often ends with tragic spiritual consequences. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" ([Gal 5:9](#)).

In reality, however, your question presents a textbook-perfect "straw man" argument - defined as "creating the illusion of having refuted a proposition by substituting it with a superficially similar yet unequivocal proposition...without ever having actually refuted the original position." In this case, you are comparing the evaluation and repair of a physical object, such as an automobile or toilet, to the diagnosis and prescription for human beings, with regard to their physical as well as mental and spiritual health. As followers of Christ, we should indeed be convinced (and convicted) of our need to care for our physical bodies, all the while recognizing that they are temples of the Spirit of God ([1 Cor 3:16](#)). As Paul explained to Timothy, "Bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tm 4:8). Attempting to care for our bodies in ways that are antithetical to God's Word is sinning against our Creator.

An additional concern over Rick Warren's latest church marketing campaign has nothing to do with helping believers improve their level of physical fitness (which is understandably connected to emotional health as well). Rather, it is Warren's boastful claim that The Daniel Plan is nothing short of "God's Prescription for Your Health," a statement that must be thoroughly evaluated and challenged.

To begin with, the biblical Daniel wasn't in need of a diet or program to help him get into top physical shape. To attempt to use him as a spiritual model to motivate Christians to healthy living demonstrates either an ignorance of the Scriptures or a dishonest marketing ploy.

The fact that the three doctors chosen by Warren to implement his church-wide regimen are widely recognized in their field of medical expertise is not in question. What every participant must ask is how the doctors' personal religious worldviews shape their understanding of the human mind, body, and spirit - and whether or not these extra-biblical worldviews will infect the so-called Daniel Plan's "prescription" with spiritually dangerous ideas and practices.

Dr. Mehmet Oz was born to first-generation Muslim parents in Cleveland, Ohio. His father's side of the family embraces Sharia law. Dr. Oz claims to be influenced by Sufism ("whirling dervishes"), a mystical Islamic



contemplative practice in which the "adept" spins himself into an altered state of consciousness in order to commune with Allah. Through the influence of his Protestant wife, he adopted some of the teachings of Emmanuel Swedenborg, the founder of a pseudo-Christian cult that denies the Trinity, believes the Last Judgment is past, and teaches that "all who do good from the truth of their own religion" will be accepted into heaven, since "doing good conjoins oneself to God" (http://www.religiusherad.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=650&Itemid=110).

Oz believes hypnosis can and should be used to address emotional and addictive behaviors. One of his secrets to maintaining a calm presence, says Oz, is practicing Transcendental Meditation, of which he is a national spokesperson: "When I meditate, I go to that place where truth lives," he said. "I can see what reality really is, and it is so much easier to form good relationships." Oz's wife, Lisa, is a Reiki Master, a very occult form of deep massage. He praised Reiki as his "favorite treatment that could change the future of medicine forever." He explained, "It broadens dramatically the spectrum of where we might be able to go in our bodies, and this is the area of energy medicine." Concluding one episode of his popular TV program, Oz ordered millions of viewers: "Try Reiki!"

Dr. Daniel Amen, another of Rick Warren's "Daniel Plan" doctors, is founder of the famous Amen Clinic, which purports to diagnose brain-behavior disorders and prescribe dietary, chemical, and meditative treatments. Licensed in both child and adult psychiatry, Amen is an ADHD specialist who practices non-medical treatments, including hypnosis, meditation, relaxation, and eye-movement desensitization. Dr. Amen recommends that everyone should strive to meditate daily for 12 minutes and recommends "an active form of yoga meditation called Kriya Kirtan." He explains that this Kundalini-based Hindu practice "is based on the five primal sounds: saa, taa, naa, maa, and aa." (An interesting choice and order of syllables for Christians to "contemplate:" Sa-ta-na...).

In his bestselling book, *Making a Good Brain Great*, Amen instructs readers to "write a poem or love letter to your brain" (p. 240). He is also an enthusiastic activist for tantric sex, which is a Hindu practice that incorporates mysticism during intercourse to attain a higher state of pleasure - and divine consciousness. In reality, this ritual behavior invites demons into the marriage bed.

Dr. Mark Hyman is the third member of Rick Warren's "Daniel Plan" triumvirate. He is the author of: *UltraCalm: A Six-Step Plan to Reduce Stress and Eliminate Anxiety*. The book presents his "simple, powerful method for generating a peaceful and harmonious state in the body-mind." Hyman's "prescription" to achieve this level of "natural healing intelligence" is not even camouflaged in pseudo-scientific language but expressed in outright New Age terminology. His "audio learning program" presents "breathing meditations and visualization exercises for feeling calm, confident, and in good spirits." (Can you say "contemplative self-hypnosis and self-affirmation"?) On this, he certainly agrees with Dr. Oz and Dr. Amen: that "mind-body medicine...is now the most important medical frontier." Dr. Hyman's books are quite popular throughout the New Age and metaphysical community. Our great concern, however, is that they will be featured and promoted wherever The Daniel Plan is taught.

Rick Warren, as a shepherd of thousands of sheep and one who has been called "America's pastor," is responsible to the Lord for what he is feeding them. Tragically, he has brought in hirelings (and worse) who will lead his sheep into meditative techniques that are "doctrines of devils" and will open them to direct communication with "seducing spirits" (1 Tm 4:1).

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