



The Church – the greatest force on Earth by Rick Warren

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but they do have a church.
Rick Warren*

The Church is the most magnificent concept ever created. It has survived persistent abuse, horrifying persecution, and widespread neglect. Yet despite its faults (due to our sinfulness), it is still God's chosen instrument of blessing and has been for 2,000 years.

The Church will last for eternity, and because it is God's instrument for ministry here on Earth, it is truly the greatest force on the face of the Earth. That's why I believe tackling the world's biggest problems – the giants of spiritual lostness, egocentric leadership, poverty, disease, and ignorance – can only be done through the Church.

The Church has eight distinct advantages over the efforts of business and government:

1. The Church provides for the largest participation.

Most people have no idea how many Christians there are in the world: More than 2 billion people claim to be followers of Jesus Christ. That's one third of the world's population! The Church has about a billion more people than the entire nation of China.

For example, about 100 million people in the United States went to church this past weekend. That's more people than will attend sporting events in the United States throughout this year. The Church is the largest force for good in the world. Nothing else even comes close.

2. The Church provides for the widest distribution.

The Church is everywhere in the world. There are villages that have little else, but they do have a church. You could visit millions of villages around the world that don't have a school, a clinic, a hospital, a fire department, or a post office. They don't have any businesses. But they do have a church. The Church is more widely spread – more widely distributed – than any business franchise in the world.

Consider this: The Red Cross noted that 90 percent of the meals they served to victims of Hurricane Katrina were actually cooked by Southern Baptist churches. Many churches were able to jump into action faster than the government agencies or the Red Cross. Why? The Church is literally everywhere, and Christians who could provide help to the Gulf Coast communicated with Christians in need of help so relief could be sent immediately.

3. The Church provides the longest continuation.

The Church has been around for 2,000 years. We're not a fly-by-night operation. The Church has a track record that spans centuries: Malicious leaders have tried to destroy it, hostile groups have persecuted it, and skeptics have scoffed at it. Nevertheless, God's Church is bigger now than ever before in history.

Why? Because it's the Church that Jesus established, and it is indestructible. The Bible calls the Church an unshakable kingdom. In Matthew 16, Jesus says, "I will build my Church and all the powers of hell will not conquer it." All the powers of hell – in other words, no hurricane, no earthquake, no tsunami, no famine, no pandemic, no army will ever conquer the Church established by Jesus Christ.

4. The Church provides the fastest expansion.

Did you know that every day 60,000 new people come to believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior? By the end of today, thousands of new churches will be started throughout the world, and that will happen tomorrow and the next day and the next.

In one country that is closed to traditional Christian missions, more than 60,000 house churches have been started in one province by the work of lay people, no different from the people who fill your church sanctuary every weekend.

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Why is fast expansion important? If you've got a problem that's growing at a rapid rate, then you need a solution that will grow even more rapidly. For instance, HIV/AIDS is growing at an incredibly fast rate in the world. Yet thank God the Church is outgrowing the disease, so more and more believers can help minister to those with HIV/AIDS.

If we're going to tackle global giants like poverty, disease, or illiteracy, then we must be part of something

ABOUT

WEB SITES

Celebrate Recovery
HIV/AIDS Caring Community
Pastors.com
Purpose Driven Connection
Purpose Driven Church
Purpose Driven Life
Saddleback Church
Saddleback Resources
Shape Discovery
The P.E.A.C.E. Plan

MY ARTICLES

[The Church – the greatest force on Earth](#)

[Facing the world's five giants!](#)

[A plan for blessing the whole world](#)

[Use your influence to tackle HIV/AIDS](#)

[Little faith+Big God=Huge results](#)

[Why Does God Allow Evil?](#)

[Use your uniqueness in service to God](#)

[Does spiritual growth just happen?](#)

[The Great Commission: Starting where you are in your life mission](#)

[Trusting God's delays](#)

that's growing faster than the problem. The Church is doing just that!

5. The Church provides the highest motivation.

Why do any of us do what we do in ministry? It's not to make money, not to make a name for ourselves and not for duty to our nation. We do it out of love. Jesus stated it as the Great Commandment: "Love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself." We wouldn't do the hard work required to tackle these global giants for money, for fame, or for anything else. It just wouldn't be worth it; we'd quit before the end.

We're motivated to keep at the hard work of ministry because we love God, and our love for God compels us to love other people. It is love that never gives up; it is love that keeps moving forward despite the appearance of impossible odds; and it is love that outlasts any problem.

6. The Church provides the strongest authorization.

God authorized the Church to take on global giants, such as spiritual lostness, egocentric leadership, poverty, disease, and ignorance. With God's authorization, the outcome is guaranteed to be successful.

When you know that God has authorized you to do something, you don't worry about failure because God doesn't sponsor flops. If God says we're going to do it, it's going to happen. It is inevitable. In fact, the Bible teaches that God will give us his power to complete the task. This is God's way - ordinary people empowered by his Spirit.

7. The Church provides the simplest administration.

The Church is organized in such a way that we can network faster and with less bureaucracy than most governmental agencies or even well-meaning charities. For instance, the organizational structure at Saddleback, which is based on the New Testament model, holds that every member is a minister. Each person in our church family is encouraged to use his or her own S.H.A.P.E. (Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, Experiences) to do what God has called him or her to do. There is no bureaucracy or hierarchy. There isn't a single committee, and the process doesn't require a long list of approvals.

The old wineskin of command and control won't work well in the 21st century. The organization of the future is the "network." And there's no better worldwide network than the Church, where every member is a minister and empowered to do what God wants done.

The P.E.A.C.E. Plan

Want to learn more about Rick Warren's historic plan to tackle the global giants of spiritual lostness, egocentric leadership, poverty, disease, and ignorance? Check out Purpose Driven Ministries' P.E.A.C.E. Plan Web site.

Consider it this way – tens of millions of Christians in millions of small groups that are part of churches around the world can take on the global giants with no other authority than that given from Jesus Christ. In other words, we have God's permission and we have God's command to do it. There is no need to seek permission from anyone else.

8. The Church provides for God's conclusion.

Since we believe the Bible is God's Word, we already know the end of history. Jesus said in Matthew 24: "The good news about God's Kingdom will be preached in all the world to every nation, and then the end will come." It is inevitable and unavoidable.

When you consider these eight advantages, think about the exponential explosion of ministry when millions upon millions of small groups in millions upon millions of churches organize in such a way that each person can do their part in attacking the five global giants.

What do you think could happen if God's people prayed against these global giants, prepared for action against these giants, and then moved through faith to tackle these giants?

We may look at these problems and think, "These are too big! How could we possibly solve them?"

But with God, nothing is impossible – and if we all work together as his Church, we'll see these giants fall just as Goliath fell when faced with David's obedience to God.

Pastor, it is a great privilege and an awesome responsibility to lead a local church. God wouldn't have placed you where you are if he didn't believe you could handle the task before you. You play a vital role in tackling these global giants. It is my privilege to co-labor with you.