



## CULTURE

# Forget Oprah's Magazine: This is the Year of Rick Warren

Bradley J. Moore

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It has only been four short weeks since I predicted that theologian, Rick Warren, was going to be a hot commodity in 2009. Sure enough, last week the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported that Pastor Warren is launching a quarterly magazine called, what else, but *Purpose Driven Connection*.

*Readers Digest* have teamed up with Warren and the Purpose Driven Network with high hopes of reaching publishing nirvana by literally connecting millions of readers around a common interest, that of being purpose-driven Christians.

The idea is to bundle the magazine together with numerous multimedia resources including an online social-network web site, and to leverage a captive audience of evangelical Christians.

According to the *WSJ*, "The idea is to envelop subscribers in a multimedia web of Dr. Warren's message." Very sticky, indeed.

This is all just fine with me because I am so tired of Oprah's omnipresence, and it's high time someone else steps in to dethrone her. She has somehow saturated her watered-down brand of self-help spirituality through every possible media outlet imaginable. Now I hear there's even an Oprah store? Well that just about did it for me. Enough already with Oprah. Come on people, let's make room for someone different.!

"But," you say, "Isn't this a bad time to be launching a major media publication, what with the global economic sinkhole in my back yard and all?" Au contraire, mon ami! These times, in fact, may be terrific for launching something like this – spiritual helps.

Think about it. People can no longer tap into their home equity lines to find their meaning and purpose, and the troubles of the world are causing more anxiety and depression than we've seen in 50 years.

Americans are probably more in the mood for spiritual substance now than ever before, especially if the offer of online community comes with it. Plus, the publishers say they don't have to rely on advertising to make it successful. Get it?

The premier issue presents Rick Warren on the cover sporting a casual smile. He is happy, but not *too* happy. We are in a severe recession, after all.

The feature story promises an interview with President Obama. Like this type of thing happens every day here at *Purpose Driven Connection*! No big deal. See? Our freakin' president has even bought into this thing!

The magazine cover also promises articles rounded up from the usual suspects of Christian gumbo fare: Lee Strobel, Bill Hybels, Max Lucado. Which reminds me; the Christian publishing industry could use some new blood.

One more thing. I think this high visibility publication might be an ideal opportunity for Warren to undo the one-size-fits-all perception of Christians. You know what I'm talking about; that they are all politically identical right wing, rigid, hateful, homophobic, elitist, stone throwing warmongers.

Perhaps this is a chance for him to use his public persona and media influence through this publication to recast the world's impression of Christianity as a more diverse group of caring and loving people.

More like Jesus was, I guess. Maybe that thought is a bit too edgy, but I'm just wondering out loud.

So there you have it. The Warren train has left the station. And don't say you didn't see it coming,