

George O. Wood Thanks Rick Warren for Impacting His Family

It's with a heavy heart that I send condolences to Pastor **Rick Warren**, his wife Kay and their family at the passing of their son, Matthew.

On behalf of the **Assemblies of God**, my family and myself, I wish to express love and appreciation for Rick and Kay, their family and the Saddleback community, along with ongoing prayers for comfort and strength.

I first met Rick when I was assistant superintendent for the Assemblies of God in Southern California. I asked Rick to speak at a district event to encourage church planting at the beginning of the Decade of Harvest—around 1990. This was before Rick had published his books and became well known. He came and encouraged us and we got off to a great start—opening 20 new churches a year for four years in a row before I left to become general secretary.

Rick and Kay have brought great credit to the cause of Christ, both globally and locally. They have a good reputation among those who do not yet follow Jesus. In this regard, I am especially indebted to Rick for the impact he has had on my own family.

During a difficult season in my daughter's marriage she decided to go back to church and take our then 4-year-old grandson with her. She went to Saddleback. Her husband, Rick, decided to follow her—more to disprove anything she was hearing than actually interested in it. The first Sunday there, Rick Warren said, "There are two things you need to do, and if you're not doing these nothing else is right. First, love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and

strength. Second, love your neighbor as yourself.”

My son-in-law thought to himself, “Well, I’m not doing either one of those.” So, they began attending Saddleback together.

Right away, Evangeline had rededicated herself to the Lord; my son-in-law Rick took longer—he wanted to have time to evaluate whether what he was hearing and experiencing was true. It took him three years, but he came to faith on Easter weekend 2005 when Rick Warren gave the invitation.

Ultimately our son-in-law left a prosperous business career and felt the call of the Lord to come to Convoy of Hope, and he is now a credentialed minister of the **Assemblies of God**.

Our family will always be grateful to Rick Warren for the indispensable part he and Saddleback had in the bringing of our daughter, son-in-law and grandson to faith.