

Gregg L. Cunningham, Executive Director

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Dear Pro-Life Friend,

On September 28, 2008, we received a note from a nineteen-year-old North Carolina girl who saw our abortion photos and wrote to tell us that these images had talked her out of killing her baby: "I decided to keep my son. Now he is a healthy seven-month-old and he is my WORLD!" This little boy would have been chopped up and flushed into the sewer had we not reached his mother with the truth.

But even in the church, Americans greatly underestimate the horror of abortion. Sectarian ignorance is especially problematic because only the church can stop abortion. The fact that the World Health Organization has reported 50 million abortions in a single year means that every forty-eight months, literally hundreds of millions of unborn children are being butchered. That makes abortion the most lethal atrocity ever. How can it be that there is no dialogue over the adequacy of the church's response to a tragedy of this magnitude? Perhaps because there is so much confusion over just how big it actually is.

PLEASE HELP US SAVE LIVES BY VISITING www.abortionNO.org TO DOWNLOAD THIS LETTER AND THEN SEND IT TO YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS LIST!

In the January 2008 issue of *Church Executive* magazine, Kay Warren, wife of Saddleback Church Pastor Rick Warren, wrote an article titled "Why your church should join the battle against AIDS." She quotes a pastor who says of the AIDS pandemic, "If it is indeed the greatest catastrophe of human history, then it follows too that it is the greatest opportunity of human history." But by any reasonable standard, AIDS isn't the "greatest catastrophe of human history." The 25 million to 40 million people killed by AIDS in all the years since the pandemic began are only a fraction of the number of abortion deaths which occur every twelve months! Saddleback now sees the AIDS crisis; it wasn't always so.

SaddlebackFamily.com quotes Pastor Warren's expression of concern that he might be oblivious to major crises: "That night I sat under the African sky and thought, 'How did I miss the AIDS crisis?' Then I asked God: 'What else have I been missing? What are the problems so big that no one else has been able to solve them?'" How could God's answer not include "abortion"?

The church isn't having a discussion of *what* to do about abortion because it hasn't yet resolved the question of *whether* it is obligated to do anything at all. Is the unborn child our current neighbor or merely our future neighbor? Is abortion an undesirable but understandable necessity or is it child sacrifice on the same scale as newborns being cast into the fires of Moloch? The answers to these questions would help define the extent of the church's mandate to intervene against abortion but the questions aren't even being asked. Pastors are desperate to avoid conflict, especially the sort of conflict associated with any intellectually honest debate over the adequacy of the church's response to atrocities such as abortion.

One prominent example is the Pastors.com posting of an article by Pastor Warren titled "What the Bible says about handling disunity." The problem with the essay is that the scripture cited as authority for Pastor Warren's policy on disunity clearly does not support that policy. He lists six steps for dealing with "disunity." The first is to "Avoid situations which cause arguments." But he cites 2 Timothy 2:23-24, in

which Paul counsels against “foolish and stupid arguments....” Paul is not saying to avoid all arguments. He is drawing an important distinction between arguments which are productive and those which are counter-productive. A pastor who attempts to quash every dispute seems controlling and insecure. Acts 18:27-28 describes Paul and Barnabas challenging believers from Judea with “sharp dispute and argument” over doctrinal differences. This passage teaches that it is neither “foolish nor stupid” to invite as much disunity as is reasonably necessary to correct serious error. The alternative would be to tolerate error in the interest of unity. In Acts 11:2-18, believers criticized Peter and started an argument which gave him an opportunity to correct serious mistakes in the church in Jerusalem. There is simply no scriptural authority for such a categorical condemnation of the disunity which results from a necessary search for truth.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE UNBORN IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING BY MAKING CBR A BENEFICIARY OF YOUR WILL OR TRUST.

Pastor Warren’s second rule says “Teach troublemakers to repent.” Here he cites 2 Timothy 2:25-26, in which Paul says, “Those who oppose him [the pastor] he must gently instruct in the hope that God will grant them repentance” The problem with this rule for “handling disunity” is that Pastor Warren assumes anyone who challenges his thinking (which I would distinguish from challenging his authority) is a “troublemaker.” On top of that, his invocation of scripture referring to “repentance” assumes that all such challenges are sinful. But Proverbs 15:32 teaches that “... whoever heeds correction gains understanding.” Is it only appropriate for the pastor to correct subordinates and laity, or may subordinates and laity respectfully correct the pastor?

His third rule is “Warn those causing trouble that their negative words hurt others.” He then cites 2 Timothy 2:14, which condemns “quarreling about words.” Here again, there is an exaggerated assumption that even tactful disagreement with Saddleback’s teaching is a “quarrel.” But dictionary.com defines a “quarrel” as an “angry dispute.” If a dispute addresses substantive issues instead of word games and is loving instead of angry, how can it be “of no value” (which is the “ruinous” sort of controversy against which Paul warns at the end of that verse)? Proverbs 15:5 tells us that “... whoever heeds correction shows prudence.” “Negative words” may indeed “hurt others,” but if those words speak truth to power as regards important issues, should that important truth be suppressed merely because some may find it hurtful? Should important truth be covered up to avoid upsetting the most emotionally sensitive among us?

The fourth rule is “Make a plea for harmony and unity.” Here he cites Philippians 4:2, in which Paul says, “I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.” But without a shred of evidence to suggest that the conflict between these two women (thought to be deaconesses by some commentators) was inappropriate, Pastor Warren makes a leap of logic and warns that “Fighting in a church doesn’t just affect the combatants; it influences the whole church as people start taking sides.” He then refers to those responsible for disunity as “causing problems.” Some types of disunity are obviously to be avoided but here again, he makes no clear attempt to distinguish between disagreements which are “fighting” and those which are healing. He seems to believe that “taking sides” is necessarily “causing problems” instead of solving problems. This obsession with harmony is totally out of sync with Paul’s pedagogy (theory of teaching). This apostle’s entire ministry involved the calculated provocation of arguments in fellowships which had gone off the tracks as regards matters of theology or practice.

Rule five says “Rebuke with authority if necessary.” The scripture for this guideline is Titus 2:15-3:1, which refers to the need to “rebuke” those who are “disobedient.” But is all disagreement “disobedience”? Pastor Warren closes this section by warning pastors that they “... may need to confront the contentious person....” Sometimes contentiousness is sinful but sometimes it is saintly.

His final rule for avoiding disunity is to “Remove them from the church if they ignore two warnings.” Here he cites Titus 3:10-11, which directs leaders to “Warn a divisive person once and then warn him a second

time. After that, have nothing to do with him.” Pastor Warren then urges leaders to get “rid of troublemakers” to “protect the unity of your church.” Here, as well, there is no attempt to distinguish between controversy caused by wise, discerning critics and that instigated by “troublemakers.”

PLEASE HELP US CONSTRUCT THIRTY-FIVE NEW SIGNS FOR OUR CHURCH PROJECT. \$200 WILL PAY FOR ONE SIGN WITH A LIFE-SAVING MINISTRY MESSAGE!

Pastor Warren closes with the admonition that “it’s our job to protect our congregations from Satan’s greatest weapon – disunity.” Imprudent disunity can certainly be a danger but the idea that it is Satan’s “greatest weapon” strains credulity. We can all name influential churches which teach and practice doctrinal error which Satan is using to cause far more destruction than could ever be wrought by disunity. These are exactly the kinds of churches Paul spent his entire ministry trying to reform. He was struggling to establish the very definition of Christianity – a struggle which continues to this day and won’t be resolved until Christ’s return. He used a combination of threats and promises which created divisions and forced people to take sides. It is important to bear in mind that, despite his having planted these churches, he was neither a member nor a leader in their fellowships and his right to even make these accusations was in dispute. Paul was so controversial that he was actually forced to defend his contention that he was a true apostle (Galatians 1:11, 2, Corinthians 11:12).

In 2 Cor. 13:2, he divisively threatened wayward believers that “on my return I will not spare those who have sinned” He was equally contentious in Philemon 1:8, when he reminded wavering Christians that “because of the authority Christ has given me, I could order you to do what you should do” Instead of ignoring the heterodoxy of the church in Galatia, he expressed “astonishment” that so many were so quickly “deserting” their Savior, and in verse 9 he “condemned” those who were teaching false doctrine. In Ephesians 4:17, he confronted those who were “living as the Gentiles do,” and lest they mistake his stern correction for an optional suggestion, he added that he “insisted on it in the Lord” In Philippians 3:2, he put the church on notice of the dangers of men who were doing evil (which commentators suggest involved the teaching of false doctrine) and he called them “dogs.” In Galatians 1:9, he called for the “eternal condemnation” of men such as these. In Galatians 2:4, he refers to “false brothers who infiltrated our ranks to spy” In verse 11 he says, “When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.” These were “negative words” which probably “hurt others.” But instead of accepting error in the interest of harmony, he also cautioned the church in Colossians 2:4 that they should not be “deceived by fine sounding arguments ...” and to impress upon them the importance of accepting his arguments, he warns them in verse 6 that “the wrath of God is coming.” He was also involved in a power struggle in II Thessalonians 1:2 with men who had sent the church counterfeit letters contradicting Paul’s teachings. In chapter 2, verse 3, he commands the church to keep away from anyone who “does not live according to the teaching you received from us.” In 1 Timothy 1:3, he couldn’t get to a church which had come under the influence of several of Paul’s critics, so he sent Timothy, whom he directs to “command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer....” In 1 Timothy 4:1-2, he denounces teachers of false doctrine as “hypocritical liars.” In 2 Timothy 4:14, he personalizes his battle with a doctrinal rival by naming his name, and in 2 Timothy 2:17 he names several more who were challenging his theology.

Acts 15:41 says Paul’s purpose in all this “troublemaking” was “strengthening the churches.”

He was even more divisive with unbelievers. As an evangelist, he incited riots almost everywhere he preached. Paul was such a “troublemaker” in the Book of Acts that many of his listeners conspired to kill him in Damascus (Acts 9:23), attempted to kill him in Jerusalem (Acts 9:29), ran him out of Antioch (Acts 13:50), threatened his life in Iconium (Acts 14:5), stoned him and left him for dead in Lystra (Acts 14:19), attacked and beat him in Macedonia (Acts 16:22), stormed his residence in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5), drove him from Berea (Acts 17:13), dragged him before the authorities in Corinth (Acts 18:12), and attempted to silence him with mob violence in Ephesus (Acts 19:29). Paul also incited two riots in which he was almost

killed in Jerusalem, the city in which the Book of Acts ends with a description of a plot to assassinate him (Acts 21:30-31, Acts 23:10, 6-7, Acts 23:10, Acts 23:12).

A \$60 GIFT WOULD PAY FOR DIESEL FUEL FOR ONE BILLBOARD TRUCK FOR ONE SUNDAY OF DRIVING AT OUR CHURCH PROJECT DISPLAY OF ABORTED BABY PHOTOS!

It may be tempting to distinguish Paul's circumstances from our own in an effort to dismiss his example as irrelevant to our rights and responsibilities, but it won't work. Paul himself exhorts us to "pattern after me, follow my example, as I imitate and follow Christ, the Messiah." And what was Christ's example?

Christ Himself warned us in Luke 12:50-53 that we should not "...think I came to bring peace on earth." Then He explains, "No I tell you, but division." Did Christ only come to divide believers from unbelievers? Paul repeatedly divides the church but sees no contradiction in saying his ministry "imitates" Christ's. In John 6:60-66, Jesus emphasized a divisive teaching He knew would "offend" many of His followers and drive them away. He understood that true believers would stay and He used this hard truth to purge His ranks of those who were not sincere in their faith.

If we can't involve the church in this fight, we lose. Without a serious, internal church dialogue on abortion, we will not involve the church. That dialogue is likely to create arguments and division. Church leaders generally hate disunity more than they hate abortion. It is likely, therefore, that there will be no dialogue which is not forced from the outside, making the long-avoided issue of abortion unavoidable. We aren't picking on Pastor Warren, but we can't ignore the fact that he has trained 400,000 pastors worldwide and 157,000 church leaders subscribe to his Ministry Toolbox worldwide. When he puts this issue on his back burner, a huge percentage of the church follows his example.

The abortion industry has been shrewd enough to not bother the church. The pro-life movement has been foolish enough to not bother the church. Nothing changes until the church is bothered. With God's help, we are about to bother the church on abortion as it has never been bothered before.

Lord bless,



Gregg Cunningham
Executive Director

P.S. On September 29, 2008, an eighteen-year-old boy wrote us from Ann Arbor, MI. He is almost certainly a student at the University of Michigan, where we are currently driving our Reproductive Choice Campaign trucks with billboard-sized abortion photos on the sides and backs. He said of our trucks: "THEY WERE AMAZING!!! It's about time these people's eyes were opened!" The next day a twenty-year-old girl from Georgia said our pictures "opened my eyes to the true nature of abortion" Jesus said in John 9:39, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see" Please help us open the eyes of those who are killing their children and those churches who are ignoring this atrocity.