

Gregg L. Cunningham, Executive Director

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Dear Pro-Life Friend,

On August 20, 2008, we received a remarkable e-mail message from a thirty-one-year-old woman who lives in Cortez, CO. She had just seen our abortion images and she wrote to say: "I gave myself to Christ three years ago and was still pro-choice until the last few months. I knew abortion is wrong but this site really hit it home for me. It makes sense now what I have been feeling." This woman is a Christian but she still got abortion wrong -- until she saw our pictures.

There are different levels of "knowing" and pictures can convince pregnant women to reject abortion when words alone would have failed. Pictures can also bring post-abortive parents to true repentance. They can activate indifferent pro-lifers who say they oppose abortion but have done little or nothing to stop the killing. And this disconnect between what pro-life Christians say and what they do is why we are losing.

At Saddleback Church's Civil Forum on August 16, 2008, Pastor Rick Warren asked Senators Barak Obama and John McCain what they intend to do about abortion. A more important question might be what does Pastor Warren intend to do about it? How are we going to get politicians to actively oppose abortion if we can't get pastors to seriously defend life?

Senator Obama was widely criticized for passing the buck on the question of when a developing baby is entitled to human rights. As the world now knows, he punted with the assertion that this judgment "is above my pay grade." He also predicted that pro-lifers might find his position "inadequate." But is his evasion any more "inadequate" than the nonfeasance of the pro-life pastors and politicians who reflexively pass the buck on the question of who is responsible for defending the rights which Senator Obama refuses to define?

The four men who might just be America's most influential leaders each say they are against abortion. But Pastor Billy Graham and his possible successor, Pastor Rick Warren, as well as President George Bush and his possible successor, Senator John McCain, have done little to stop the killing. Each, save Pastor Warren, has supported exceptions in cases of rape and incest. Only Pastor Warren has said that God can bring good even out of the sinful tragedy of rape ([pbs.org](http://pbs.org), Religion & Ethics Newsweekly, August 22, 2008).

Pastor Graham, whom I greatly respect, is unquestionably pro-life. His "MY ANSWER" column at [BillyGraham.org](http://BillyGraham.org) advises a single mother that "...it would be wrong for you to end the life of the little child growing inside you." But then Pastor Graham attempts to justify his relative lack of involvement with the atrocity of abortion by telling *USA Today* ("The Gospel of Billy Graham: Inclusion" May 15, 2005) that "If I took sides on all these different divisive areas, I would cut off the people that I really want to reach. So I've felt that the Lord would have me just preach the Gospel ..." Pastor Graham, therefore, appeased the crowds by abandoning the babies. But can God be pleased with a strategy for evangelism which trades the lives of children for the souls of sinners?

Pastor Warren, whom I also greatly respect, is also unquestionably pro-life. Focus On The Family's CitizenLink.com, August 25, 2008, quotes him as saying, "A lot of people hear [about a broader agenda] and they think, 'Oh, evangelicals are giving up on believing that life begins at conception. They're not

giving up on that at all. Not at all.” But Pastor Warren then attempts to justify his relative lack of involvement with the atrocity of abortion in *New York Magazine*, May 28, 2007, in which columnist John Heilemann writes “... regarding his pro-life stance, Warren says, ‘I’m just not rabid about it.’”

On August 13, 2008, the *Los Angeles Times* published a story titled “Megastar pastor straddles a divide.” It reported that “... [Pastor Rick] Warren’s willingness to soft-pedal political issues once central to U.S. evangelicals, such as opposition to abortion, has opened him to criticism that he has strayed from his calling ...” To which Pastor Warren replies that “... he opposes abortion ... [b]ut Warren says he is also inspired by the broader message of faith and compassion in the Bible.” That “broader message” is most faithfully lived out, according to Pastor Warren, by mobilizing “... one billion Christians to attack what he calls ‘five global giants;’ spiritual emptiness, corrupt leadership, poverty, disease [with the focus on HIV/AIDS] and illiteracy.” Conspicuous by its absence is any mention of the “global giant” which is abortion.

Worldwide estimates suggest that there have been between 25 million and 40 million deaths from AIDS since the pandemic began. But U.S. abortion totals have reached 40 million since 1973 and the Guttmacher Institute estimates that 42 million unborn children are killed by abortion *every twelve months*. The World Health Organization estimated that there were 50 million abortions in 2001. The point here is that abortion deaths are astronomically more pervasive than deaths caused by HIV/AIDS. But the funding which Pastor Warren and Saddleback appropriate to fight HIV/AIDS apparently dwarfs their funding to fight abortion.

President George W. Bush, whom I also greatly respect, is also unquestionably pro-life. *The New York Times*, March 14, 1999, published a column by Bob Herbert which confirmed that “...in an interview with the Associated Press, the Texas Governor and leading contender for the Republican Presidential nomination, said he would support a constitutional amendment to outlaw abortion ...” But Governor Bush then attempts to justify his relative lack of involvement with the atrocity of abortion in the next sentence, where we read ““On the other hand ... I am realistic enough to know that America is not ready to ban abortions.”” It gets worse. “According to Mr. Bush, ‘America is not ready to overturn *Roe v. Wade* because America’s hearts are not right. And so, in the meantime, instead of arguing over *Roe v. Wade*, what we ought to do is promote policies to reduce abortions.’”

Although we are thankful that he has appointed pro-life judicial nominees, it apparently never occurred to (now) President Bush that he has any responsibility to help “get Americans ready” to reverse *Roe*, by doing all he can to “change their hearts.” Perhaps he believes that “changing hearts” is something pastors are supposed to do. Abortion has always been a political football which politicians kick to pastors by arguing that abortion is a spiritual issue. Senator Obama compounded his Saddleback Civil Forum stumble on abortion when he appeared on ABC News’ “This Week” program, Sunday, September 7, and said of unborn personhood “... I don’t presume to be able to answer these kinds of *theological* questions.” Pastors, of course, kick the issue right back to politicians with the argument that abortion is a political issue. In the *USA Today* article noted above, Pastor Graham says he avoids abortion because he is called “... to stay out of politics.” Is abortion “political”? Yes, but it is also spiritual. If pastors don’t create a pro-life cultural environment in which it is safe for pro-life politicians to overturn *Roe*, the decision may never be reversed.

Senator John McCain, whom I also greatly respect, is also unquestionably pro-life. He told Pastor Warren at the Saddleback Civil Forum that human rights begin the moment the egg is fertilized (usatoday.com, “Sharing stage ...,” August 17, 2008). But on September 5, 2008, Bill Schneider, CNN’s political analyst (cnn.com, “McCain sincere, short on answers”) said of the Senator’s convention acceptance speech, “He didn’t talk much about divisive social issues: A brief reference to his support for life ... a brief reference to judges that don’t legislate from the bench but no extended focus on social issues. That’s not the core of his agenda.” What an understatement!

Noemie Emery (“Axis of Honor,” *Weekly Standard*, September 15, 2008) reports that as late as August 24, just five days before announcing that he had chosen pro-life Alaska Governor Sarah Palin to be his running mate, Senator McCain was still determined to select Democrat Senator Joseph Lieberman. His most senior advisors only narrowly talked him out of the disaster which Senator Lieberman would have meant to his candidacy. Senator Lieberman’s voting record is so pro-abortion that NARAL rates him as 100% anti-life!

Mr. Schneider ended his CNN analysis by adding that “People really are tired of fighting.” But they are also tired of being manipulated. For years, it has been an open secret that cynical Republican strategists were urging the party to oppose abortion just enough to appease the base but not enough to actually overturn *Roe*. They fear that the loss of abortion rights would trigger catastrophic voter rejection of the Republican Party.

The *Los Angeles Times* published a related story headlined “If Ax Falls on *Roe*, It May Also Split GOP,” July 4, 2005, which noted that “The turnout [for President Bush] underscored the political value to the GOP of *Roe* as a motivating force for evangelical voters.” But the story also carried ominous warnings from “... pragmatic Republicans concerned that shifting the issue from the courts to the ballot box would lead to massive GOP losses.” The article added that “‘Smart strategists inside the party don’t want the status quo changed,’ said Tony Fabrizio, chief pollster for the 1996 Republican presidential campaign of Bob Dole.”

Many leading Republicans have made it clear that they lack the integrity to risk the women’s vote over abortion. Their cowardice stands in shameful contrast to the courage which Democrats have displayed regarding race. However imperfectly, JFK and LBJ forced civil rights legislation on many Americans who “were not ready to ban” racial injustice -- and Democrats paid a fearful political price for doing so.

What matters most regarding abortion isn’t merely *when* we believe life begins or how staunchly we oppose abortion *in the abstract*. The real issue is what we are willing to *do* to protect that life. That is the lesson Jesus taught in His Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). The priest and the Levite who went out of their way to avoid the victim of violence would, no doubt, have been opposed to street crime. They might even have *felt pity*. They just weren’t willing to *show pity*. James 2:16 says, “If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?”

The August 14, 2008 issue of the Economist.com featured an article headlined “The next Billy Graham”:

Like Mr. Graham, Mr. Warren allowed himself to get too close to the Republican Party. In 2004 he supported Mr. Bush behind the scenes, taking part in White House conference calls and informing thousands of pastors that they should read issues such as abortion ... as ‘non-negotiable.’ But like Mr. Graham, he has realized that you need to tread lightly on those non-negotiables if you want to preserve your influence. He is now emphasizing poverty, HIV-AIDS, global warming and overseas aid.

The August 18, 2008 issue of *Time* magazine features a cover story titled “The Purpose Driven Pastor,” Rick Warren America’s most powerful religious leader takes on the world.” The article says “[Pastor] Warren ... yearned for a full-scale battle with the ‘five global giants.’” A “full-scale battle” is not what he is waging against abortion. Pastor Billy Graham is quoted as hailing Pastor Warren’s “PEACE” plan (intended to eradicate the “five giants”) as “‘the greatest, most comprehensive and most Biblical vision for world missions I’ve ever heard or read about.’” But how could that vision be truly “comprehensive” if it ignores abortion, the greatest evil the world has ever seen? In Revelation 3:1-2 we read the words of Christ criticizing the vision of a church whose agenda wasn’t complete enough: “I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but ... I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of God.” Saddleback?

*Christianity Today*, July 2008, reports that “During the past four years, [Pastor] Warren’s Saddleback Church ... has sent 7,766 church members on 1,002 short-term mission trips to ‘beta-test’ new methods for church-based outreach in 68 nations.” What is new about the version of his plan he calls “PEACE 2.0”?

[Pastor] Warren has inserted ‘Promote reconciliation’ in place of ‘Plant churches.’ This is a welcome change for Bryan Crute, senior pastor of Destiny Metro Worship Church, a black megachurch in Atlanta.

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[Pastor] Crute said church leaders should view racism as just one aspect of reconciliation. He said reconciliation is about bridging the gap between God and man, resolving economic injustice and poverty and healing broken homes.

But what home could be more “broken” than a home in which parents kill their children? What about “reconciling” black parents with their unborn children?

Columbia University sociologist and historian Frank Tannenbaum estimated in his book *Slave and Citizen*, Knof (1947) that there were between 13 million and 20 million Africans captured as slaves for shipment to the New World. He further estimated that approximately 1/3 died inland on their way to the African Coast, 1/3 died crossing the Atlantic and the remaining 1/3 reached the New World more or less alive. If you take his 20 million estimate as the base, 2/3 of that number dying from the point of capture to the point of delivery would mean roughly 13 million dead, with approximately 7 million surviving the trip.

The Centers for Disease Control report that approximately 36% of all U.S. abortions are performed on black women. Of the 40 million American abortions since 1973, 14.4 million would, therefore, have killed black babies. Even if we arbitrarily assumed that 1.4 million slaves died prematurely on plantations, abortion (14.4 million black babies killed) would still have taken as many black lives as slavery (13 million killed in transit, plus 1.4 million dying after arrival, would total 14.4 million black slaves killed).

Pastor Warren has shown flexibility in adding racial “reconciliation” to his PEACE plan. But can he be persuaded to also add abortion? If it kills more people than AIDS and slavery, why not? Perhaps to preserve his “influence?” If so, that might be one aspect of Pastor Graham’s legacy which Pastor Warren would be well advised to spurn. We may find out when we launch our Matthew 28:20 church activation project at Saddleback Church. As civil rights activists used to say, “The world will be watching.”

Lord bless,



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Executive Director

P.S. Also on August 20, 2008, we received the following message from a twenty-seven-year-old woman from Yonkers, NY, who said: “I had an abortion in the past and I can’t believe I did, now that I saw this website. I will never do that again and hope I can reach other people that think the way I did before seeing this website. I’ve had so many people see this website, THANK YOU FOR OPENING MY EYES!” Praise God for your help in changing her mind after the fact. With more help, we could reach more BEFORE they make this tragic mistake.